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Religious Pluralism and the Catholic Church: Lonergan's Method and the Jacques Dupuis Controversy

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: LONERGAN'S
METHOD AND
THE JACQUES DUPUIS CONTROVERSY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN THEOLOGY

BY ANDREA JAY STAPLETON BERGER

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In memory of my parents, Theodore and Lou Ann Stapleton,
for showing me love, joy, faith, and service
and for teaching me to question fearlessly.

PREFACE

This project emerged out of a desire to explore religious pluralism as an ecclesiological issue and to use Lonergan's method of theology in service to ecclesiology. The Dupuis controversy over the theology of religious pluralism presented an opportunity to illustrate the relevance of Lonergan's method and an opportunity to discuss an important theological and pastoral challenge in the contemporary Catholic Church.

The purpose of the project is to demonstrate the ecclesiological significance of religious pluralism, the urgent need to move forward toward a more defined Christian theology of pluralism, and the necessary incorporation of language that reflects how we Christians may identify ourselves in an age of pluralism and gain a clear sense of mission in our current globalized context.

When I began this project, I anticipated that it would elucidate the ecclesiological implications of the plurality of religions in our current globalized religious situation. While this remained central to the project, a second issue emerged: the tension that has arisen between theologians and the Catholic Magisterium. Whereas the theology of religious pluralism and its direction in the future of the Catholic Church remained the primary concern, it became apparent that progress in this area depends not only upon theological resolutions, but also upon improved relationships among those who

communicate Christian theology. Hence, Lonergan's method proved to be a most useful tool in identifying the roots of this conflict and their possible solutions.

The project is structured around the controversy itself, discussing both the positions of Jacques Dupuis and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The conflict between the two is then analyzed with the use of the theological method of Bernard Lonergan. Finally, I conclude with some reflection on the controversy, the need to progress our theology of pluralism for the benefit of the global Church and its mission, and the urgent need to define the proper relationship and responsibilities of the Catholic Church's authority and theologians.

This project is but one step toward the resolution of these issues. Other theologians are taking up the issue of religious pluralism, and there has been resounding support of Dupuis' work in this area. There has also been a good deal of treatment on the matter of the problem of authority in the Church and the work of the theologian. Both areas continue to be explored. I am glad to have put Lonergan's method to use in such a practical way. I continue to find that Lonergan's method has such importance for the intersection of theology and the pastoral practice of the Catholic Church, and I have enjoyed seeing this project unfold and yield such a practical dimension. It was my hope to honor Jacques Dupuis' life-long contributions, particularly his efforts in developing a Christian theology of pluralism, and to do justice to Bernard Lonergan's great contribution to theological method and its relevance to the life of the Church. This project has proved to be just a beginning for me, as I envision many possibilities for the practical application of Lonergan's method for other ecclesiological and pastoral challenges that our Church must face in this era.

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CHAPTER ONE

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND ECCLESIOLOGICAL DIRECTIONS

The Christian Church in the third millennium faces a perduring challenge that begs for new answers: how the Church is, as universal sacrament of salvation, to relate to non-Christian religions. The Church has faced this challenge since its first days. What is new is the manner in which the Church must respond. Vatican II, which promised a new age for inter-religious relationships, called for the Church as people of God to rethink our relationship with our non-Christian brothers and sisters. Since the Council, theologians have been tangling with the shape of this new relationship. The discussion has broadened beyond simply creating a spirit of amicability after years of tension to more theological principles that include such things as the path to salvation, the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, and the universality of the Church.

Interest in religious pluralism has heightened in the globalized context of the third millennium. It is not only a matter of interest for theologians and Church leaders, but is even at the heart of global politics. With the aid of mass media, even those who were unconcerned about the change in religious demographics, and even less about the relationships among the religions, have become aware of the impact on and significance that the religions have within culture. The global visibility of religious violence has drawn many out of their indifference. For some it has raised suspicion and hostility for

those who practice another religion. For others it has raised curiosity and questions about their own religious beliefs and identity. For many believers, questioners, and unbelievers, broadened awareness of religious differences has raised questions about the existence of God and what that means for humankind.

On the other hand, and more positively, many people also consider these points from the experience of collaboration and common ground with those who believe other than they do. Combined efforts from various religions have encouraged more religious tolerance for and unity among people of different religions. This improved outlook was reflected in the welcoming spirit engendered by Popes John XXIII and John Paul II and the Second Vatican Council.

The reality of religious pluralism impacts people's individual faith lives. People wonder what makes their own religions unique or "correct" or "true." In some instances, many are taught to respect religious diversity while at the same time believing that theirs is the only correct path. And still others are taught to act with hostility toward those who believe differently. Younger generations experience more ambivalence about their religious affiliations, as the religious milieu seems to offer endless options, so much so that claiming adherence to a particular religion is considered by many, at least in Western, individualized culture, simply as another lifestyle choice among many others.

The West is experiencing great polarization between tolerance and intolerance. In some cases we find that animosity toward different religious groups functions to affirm one's own religious identity and build unity. On the other end of the spectrum, the demand for religious tolerance has become encouraged as politically correct and socially

necessary, to the extent that it may obscure the significance of one's own religious tradition. For some, this leads to indifference; for others, confusion. This may be reflected in the increasing demographic labeled "the nones," those who claim no religious affiliation at all.¹ This indifference or confusion may be reflected in the different ways that older and younger generations answer whether their religion is the only true religion, or whether people of other faiths may attain eternal life or salvation.² Globally, there is evidence that religious intolerance is a growing trend, with seventy-five percent of the world's population living in areas where there exist either political restrictions on religious practice or social hostilities towards one or more religious groups.³

The issue clearly concerns individuals in their struggle to find meaning in their lives and answers to questions about their religious identities and relationships with their neighbors. More broadly, it can determine the difference between war or peace among nations, or the laws within them. Whether one considers the impact of the plurality of religions in this millennium on individuals or global relationships, it is a reality that has raised new questions in our individual and cultural identities and is a matter for scholars

¹ Pew Research Forum, "'Nones' on the Rise," The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 9 October, 2012, <http://www.pewforum.org/Unaffiliated/nones-on-the-rise.aspx#growth> (accessed 28 June, 2013).

² Pew Research Forum, "Religion Among the Millennials," The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 17 Feb., 2010 <http://www.pewforum.org/Age/Religion-Among-the-Millennials.aspx> (accessed 28 June, 2013). See also The Pew Forum, "Views of One's Religion as the One True Faith," US Religious Landscape Survey, Comparisons, <http://religions.pewforum.org/comparisons#> (accessed 28 June, 2013). Two surveys convey this attitude; one is inter-religious views on the belief in the trueness of one's religion and the possibility of eternal life for others, and another is among different Christian groups.

³ Guardian News Service, "Religious Intolerance on the Rise," Hindustan Times, 21 Sept., 2012, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/Europe/Religious-intolerance-on-the-rise-Research/Article1-933785.aspx> (accessed 28 June, 2013).

in religious studies and theologians to interpret and communicate for the present historical situation.

Insofar as religious pluralism has influenced the world so dramatically and has caused people to contemplate human existence and the nature and meaning of our relationship with God, it is a matter for the Church. Christianity throughout two millennia has responded to these questions, and it goes without saying that the answers have varied in nature and force over the course of history. It is of primary concern for the Church in this era to consider the impact of religious pluralism on the faith and lives of its own followers, and it must consider what this means for its mission as the universal sacrament of salvation. In so many ways, the Church has identified its role in the world, especially since Vatican II, such that it can only be considered in the context of human history as the unfolding story of God's relationship with humankind. The Catholic Church, especially at Vatican II, established that its identity is constituted by its mission, and it does not exist to serve itself, but rather to mediate salvation for humankind. The Roman Catholic Church does not identify itself as merely one among many equal religions,⁴ but as the primordial sacrament of salvation for humankind, instituted by the uniquely salvific activity of the one incarnate God in the plan of creation and salvation. And yet, in spite of that, the Church may indeed be considered as one among many traditions which give transcendental meaning to human life. For Christian theologians, and ecclesiologists in particular, the mission of the Church must include a constant

⁴ One may argue that virtually every religion claims that it presents itself as the one true religion, transcending categories of its "rival" religions.

engagement of this reality of human existence and communicate its meaning. It is the responsibility of the Church to engage this contemporary context and continue to interpret the meaning of the unique salvific opportunity, even as people's understanding of themselves and the world change.

It might be said that for Bernard Lonergan, the Church is an event of communication.⁵ The Church is described by Lonergan as an “out-going process [which] exists not just for itself but for mankind [*sic*]. Its aim is the realization of the kingdom of God not only within its own organization but in the whole of human society and not only in the after life but also in this life.”⁶ Because Lonergan's ecclesiology considers historical events and cultural meanings, the multiplicity of religions is necessarily an ecclesiological concern.

Lonergan's ecclesiology, therefore, places the Church within the context of and in the service to the world. This global locus of the Church is an idea that has flourished in the enthusiastic follow-up to *Gaudium et spes*. The Council extended to the rest of the Church an open invitation and challenge to evaluate the meaning and mandates required to actively serve as the Church in the world for any age, in every circumstance. The Church's renewed expression of its self-identity not as a self-sustaining institution, but as an agent of salvation and proclamation “opened up the windows” for significant ecclesiological movement. The Council's new and dynamic approach to its role in

⁵ Joseph Komonchak, “Lonergan and Post-Conciliar Ecclesiology,” *Lonergan Workshop* 20 (2008), p. 169.

⁶ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 363-4.

salvation history, in spite of its inability to foresee future events and challenges, envisioned a new, perpetual, and honest engagement of Church and world.

The documents and committees that emerged from the Council, and even the very calling of the Council, indicated a new relationship between the Church and the world.⁷ It re-articulated the mission of the Church, in particular making a point to explain the Church as it encountered the world, and as the people of the world encountered it. In the 1960s, the global vision of the Church shone through the new dialogue and new spirit of the Church. It shone through the changes in the liturgy, in the changes emphasized for Church leadership, and in its great esteem for all the people of God. Most significant for this project is its newfound and newly expressed appreciation for other religions. Its clear esteem for non-Christian religions gave new directions to ecclesiology. It opened new possibilities, both pragmatically and theologically, for building community and, therefore, God's kingdom, on Earth.

The Church's refreshed self-expression inevitably begged for new clarifications of the Church's mission, particularly regarding evangelization, proclamation, and dialogue. Further, theologians have sought to explain the nature of the missionary activity of the Church now that we have opened ourselves to new relationships with the other religions. This calls for an examination of the very identity of the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation for all of humankind.

⁷ John O'Malley, "Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?" *Theological Studies* 67, no. 1 (2006), 8-11.

This groundbreaking outreach opened doors toward dialogue, and through these dialogues surfaced bold theological questions. Jacques Dupuis, S.J., explained this transition:

[T]heology of religions was born during the period surrounding Vatican II and that the 1960s witnessed a strong wave of theological publications on the subject, even though more by way of groping than of providing definite answers. The 1970s marked the beginning of a new question, arising worldwide from the situation created by the ever-increasing interaction between people of different religious faiths.⁸

This situation marked a methodological and philosophical shift in the theology of religions, one which demanded honest comparison among the religions and unhindered inquiry into their differences, with the aim toward better understanding of the true theological relationship between them. As the dialogue led to many favorable relationships and joint work among the religions, this progressed into deeper questions about revelation, salvation, and the role of the religions, specifically the Catholic Church. In the forty-plus years since the Council, many theologians have moved beyond dialogue to a pursuit of a theology of religions,⁹ in hopes of reaching more authentic dialogue and unity. This sort of progress should purposely extend beyond theological circles, to

⁸ Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Pluralism* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002), p. 3. Some would argue that theology of religious pluralism began before this period and had been developing prior to the Council, as is evident through the thought of Troeltsch, George Greiner, and Tillich.

⁹ The desire to move on to a theology of religions as an interpretation of the Council's efforts is not universal, however. Many would express the need to move from interreligious theory to interreligious praxis. The difference is found in the need to expand a theology of religions compared to the development of interreligious dialogue or comparative theology. See Paul Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002), 3.

impact the way in which Christianity is communicated to and lived by the faithful everywhere. When inter-religious dialogue is commonly understood as part of the centrality of the Christian faith, then it has the opportunity to transform human lives. As Bernard Lonergan has said, it is a major concern that theological reflection bears fruit.¹⁰ Theologians have a responsibility to put their research into service of the Church, and the Church has a responsibility to assimilate this work into its mission, so that it may meaningfully reach into the lives of believers and allow the Church to be a transformative mediator of grace in the world.

Theologians from various specializations have considered the relationships among the religions to be of paramount importance for the future direction of theology. Those who specialize in the theology of religions have especially picked up the critical questions left unanswered, but instigated by the Council. They have attempted to answer the question about God and humanity in terms of Christianity but with respect to the beliefs and traditions in the other religions. Out of the discussion, three general positions on pluralism have been born. First, the inclusivist position is based on the belief that God is present in the whole world and available to all, regardless of the way God's presence is expressed within religions. Thus, in this view, all religions that exist in response to God's presence and grace may offer a means for salvation.¹¹ Nonetheless, this position holds

¹⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, p. 355.

¹¹ Paul Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002), p 47. Also see work by theologians known to hold an inclusivist position, such as Clark Pinnock and John Sanders. Pinnock's *A Wideness in God's Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a world of Religions* or *No Other Name* by Sanders expound on inclusivist thought.

that while different religions may offer pathways to salvation, the true and most correct path to salvation is contained within one particular religion. The second position on the plurality of religions is exclusivist, which holds that one and only one religion possesses the truth, and that anything outside of that is incorrect and thus non-salvific.¹² The third line of thought is that of the religious pluralist, such as John Hick, who argues that each religion expresses a different response to the same divine truth.¹³ Unlike the inclusivist position, this holds that every religion equally offers the possibility of salvation, and that there is no one way that is more correct than another. Representatives of all of these positions believe in the salvific activity of God in the world, but the way in which salvation is expressed in each religion is different.

Since the Council, ecclesiologists have addressed the issue of religious pluralism in terms of the Church's mission. If we are proposing methods of theology that go beyond dialogue and cooperation, what does this suggest for the self-identity of the Church? What does it mean for a Church with Christ at its center and foundation, if we accept that there is some salvific value to religious traditions that do not accept the salvific value of Jesus Christ? This question has been especially prominent in redefining the mission to those who work to evangelize and proclaim Christ to those regions of the world that are mostly non-Christian. The theology of mission has evolved considerably over the last fifty years, but may have as a result of this, become even more authentically

¹² Raimon Panikkar, *The Intra-Religious Dialogue* (New York: Paulist, 1978), p. 5.

¹³ John Hick, *God Has Many Names* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), p. 6. For more on this, see some of Hick's books, including: *Who or What is God?*; *The Metaphor of God Incarnate: Christology in a Pluralistic Age*; *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent*.

Christian.¹⁴

Still, the theological quandary remains: what to make of the ecclesiocentric model for salvation while sincerely respecting the truth and goodness found in the other religions? The critical question becomes this: can a theology of religious pluralism remain consistent with the Christian faith? More specifically, what does this theological interpretation suggest for the mission and identity of the Church? Do different concepts of pluralism or inclusivism conform to Christian teaching more than others, or is the development of any pluralistic theology incongruent with Christianity? Furthermore, as we shall see in the following chapters, how is conformity with Christian theology defined – by theologians or by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church?

Jacques Dupuis, S.J., a Catholic theologian and major contributor to the area of inter-religions dialogue, attempted to construct a Christian theology of pluralism. Dupuis' work began in India, where he was ordained and began his vocation as a missionary. In India he found inspiration for his work in religious pluralism, while remaining devoted to the Christian faith and Catholic doctrine. He was considered a pioneer in the theological subdiscipline of the theology of religions, and some of his much respected work included *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue* (2002), *Who Do You Say I Am? An Introduction to Christology* (1994), *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church* (2001), and several other publications. In 1997, he published the controversial book, *Toward a Christian*

¹⁴ See Peter C. Phan's work on globalization, inculturation, and mission. In particular see *Being Religious Interreligiously: Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue*, especially for the situation of plurality in postmodernity, and *In Our Own Tongues: Perspectives from Asia on Mission and Inculturation*.

Theology of Pluralism. While more detail about his theology will follow in chapter two, I will write a few words about his intention for the book.

Dupuis noted from his work in India that where there is a plurality of religions, a study of a religion necessarily implies a study of religions.¹⁵ The aim of his book is to provide, in light of the changes in the Catholic Church's relationship with other religions, a theological reflection on the issues that have arisen in the context of religious pluralism, to "trace a path toward a Christian theology of religious pluralism."¹⁶ The critical task for theology in this day is to reflect on God's plan in light of our historical context and on the reality of religious pluralism, the experience of God by people participating in many different traditions. He says,

the question no longer simply consists of asking what role Christianity can assign to the other historical religious traditions but in searching for the root-cause of pluralism itself, for its significance in God's own plan for humankind, for the possibility of a mutual convergence of the various traditions in full respect of their differences, and for their mutual enrichment and cross-fertilization.¹⁷

His method demonstrates his cognizance of the historical context in which we live, and of the tradition of Catholic literature on the matter of non-Christian religions. His aim in the book is to make Christian theology relevant in the current globalized context, and to put Catholic theology into conversation with a theology of religions. His method is therefore grounded in the deep roots of Christianity, with deference to Christ's

¹⁵ Dupuis, *Toward*, 10-11.

¹⁶ Dupuis, *Toward*, 1-2.

¹⁷ Dupuis, *Toward*, 11.

centrality and a focus on its ecclesiological trajectory. He relies heavily on the doctrines of the Church, the writings of theologians throughout the Church's history, conciliar documents and encyclicals. He focuses particularly on the Church's self-identification in the twentieth century, for he seeks harmony between the teachings of the Church and the theologies of world religions. Furthermore, he has analyzed the tradition of Catholic doctrine on religious pluralism in light of the historical context in which it was written. Primarily he asked how we as Christians proclaim Jesus as the one and only savior as we also recognize the Holy Spirit at work salvifically in other religions, and in the same manner by which we have accounted for the many who lived before Jesus Christ. He extends traditional language by coining the term "inclusive pluralism" to achieve this reconciliation. He finishes by proposing ecclesiological directions grounded in the initiatives laid by Vatican II and the subsequent theological paths which have gained momentum and given direction toward an ecclesiology mindful of pluralism.¹⁸ Dupuis' theology will be more fully expanded in the following chapter.

It came as something of a shock to many in the theological community when the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith rebuked Dupuis for his book and in 2001 issued a notification on its errors. The notification in 2001 recognized Dupuis' attempt to remain in line with Catholic doctrine, and sought to clarify for the book's audience the official Catholic doctrine in the following areas:

1. The Sole and Universal Salvific Mediation of Jesus Christ
2. The Unicity and Completeness of Revelation of Jesus Christ

¹⁸ Gerald O'Collins, "Jacques Dupuis' Contributions to Religious Dialogue," *Theological Studies* 64 (2003), 390.

3. The Universal Salvific Action of the Holy Spirit
4. The Orientation of All Human Beings to the Church
5. The Value and Salvific Function of the Religious Traditions¹⁹

At the request of the CDF, Dupuis acknowledged the notification. The notification created a quite personal and professional struggle for Dupuis. It ought to be noted that the CDF issued the notification for what it called ambiguities, and intended to state its understanding of official Catholic teaching for the book's readers. While it did not name the book as heretical, it imposed on Dupuis what he deemed as "limited freedom."²⁰ It forced the end of his teaching career at the Gregorian University in Rome, just prior to his last semester of teaching. He later felt as though all of his subsequent work, his public lectures and writings were under severe scrutiny by the CDF. In the months preceding his death, he noticed pressure on his Jesuit superiors to silence him. Soon after this controversy, Dupuis developed health problems and died in 2004, leaving the discussion over his ideas on a Christian theology of pluralism to others. For his life's work he did not apologize, but rather declared his hope in Christ's understanding his true and faithful intentions.

I trust that the Lord who reads the secrets of the hearts will know that my intention in writing what I have written and saying what I have said has only been to express to the best of my ability my deep faith in Him and my

¹⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Notification 'Dupuis'." Vatican: the Holy See. January 24, 2001, Preface, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20010124_dupuis_en.html (accessed June 1, 2013).

²⁰ Gerard O'Connell, "Father Jacques Dupuis, Leading Jesuit Theologian, Dies In Rome," *UCANews.com*, 29 Dec., 2004, http://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/2004/12/29/father-jacques-dupuis-leading-jesuit-theologian-dies-in-romeucan-column-vatican-vista-by-gerard-oconnell&post_id=5 (accessed 28 June, 2013).

total dedication to him. Rather than being inclined to do the talking when we meet, I hope to hear from the Lord, in spite of my failings and shortcomings, a word of comfort and encouragement.²¹

Theologians concerned with the life of the Church to come have widely endorsed the groundwork laid by Dupuis. There have been countless contributions made in the study of dialogue and pluralism, which illustrate its centrality to the future not only of the Church but in the wider functioning of the human race. Hans Küng, for example, has stressed that any movement toward world peace will depend on peace among religions.²² Too many horrors, occurring within the last century alone, offer ample evidence for this. Within the span of a lifetime, the human race has experienced a world tainted with massive religious-based violence. Persecution and genocide have not been eliminated from our world, much of which continues to be religiously motivated. Other forms of violence, including the violence and discrimination that has plagued Muslim Americans (or those perceived to be Muslim) since the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 demonstrate that religious tension remains a prominent cultural force which impacts life every day for a large part of the American population. Less extreme, but just as malignant, is the rampant intolerance that breeds attitudes of mass ignorance and prejudice and spreads through cultures world-wide. As Christian theologians, we have a special task to communicate the societal and cultural implications for greater

²¹ O'Connell, "Father Jacques Dupuis".

²² Karl-Josef Kuschel and Hans Küng, *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions* (London: SCM, 1993). Hans Kung has held this thought as a core of his theology on inter-religious dialogue, and it can be found in other sources, such as *Christian Revelation and World Religions* and *Christianity among World Religions*.

understanding of and respect for the multiplicity of religions, and we must do this meaningfully within the context of our tradition and according to its teaching.

Contributors to the theology of religions, especially Jacques Dupuis, have taken this goal to heart in their work, viewing it as one of the center-most tasks of the Church in the years ahead. Gerald O'Collins writes this of Dupuis' work:

Jacques Dupuis, as a systematic theologian who has spent nearly 40 years of his life in India, offers a shining example who has been supporting such a dialogue-not only through his *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* and *Christianity and the Religions* but also through other publications and activities. His theology of the religions converges with the official teaching and actions of John Paul II, and provides it with a massive theological underpinning.²³

As O'Collins points out, this task to explore this conflict to determine a way forward is central to theology in this day. The task to further Dupuis' efforts to find more harmony between theologies of pluralism and the teachings of the Catholic Church remains critical for our multi-religious world. We may ask why this agreement is sought, if even possible. I suggest that this task is one that ecclesiologists in the twenty-first century cannot ignore. We live in world that is decidedly pluralistic. We have witnessed the catastrophes that have resulted from the absence of dialogue and understanding. While the Church has already expressed its favor towards dialogue with other religions, we must note that the question at hand requires a deeper theological probing into ontological and soteriological issues. The Church has admitted some possibility of salvation for others outside the Christian faith, but we as theologians, particularly we who

²³ O'Collins, "Jacques Dupuis' Contributions," 397.

work in ecclesiology, need not simply rest in the idea that we will live side-by-side and hope for the best end for the ones who, in spite of the truth and goodness by which they live, never claim membership within the Christian Church. There must be a foundation to our hope. There is theological groundwork, even in the doctrinal statements of the Catholic Church, to expand our language to make more sense of the relationship among the religions.

We instead must investigate theologically what it means for the identity and mission of the Church in this age to live in a religiously pluralistic world. This is a complex task that will require the vision of many dedicated people. But we must ask this for now: why, with all of the progress that the Catholic Church has made with regard to religious diversity, has this controversy occurred? What does it suggest about the direction of the Church in this age, that a conflict results from a book whose author relied heavily on the Church's teaching? Dupuis' work had been very well esteemed by his colleagues, even those who may have leaned more toward the conservative end. Several theologians rushed to Dupuis' defense, including Cardinal König, Archbishop D'Souza, Ladislav Orsy, among others. Gerald O'Collins, a strong advocate of Dupuis, assisted Dupuis with his dispute with the CDF. Like Dupuis, O'Collins found the same foundations in Catholic Christology and ecclesiology that lends itself to a theology of pluralism. It seems worth investigating why a scholar so well-respected by his peers from diverse perspectives, and who so devoutly leaned on the teachings of the Church to build his theology, was regarded as so errant by the CDF. This conflict should be carefully considered by theologians and Church leaders, for it demonstrates how

seriously such disagreements and condemnations can impede the growth in theology and the Church's activity in the world.

So this project will explore the dispute between the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and Jacques Dupuis. I will examine the motive and method of Dupuis as well as the position of the CDF to determine what this controversy suggests for the direction of the Church in an age of pluralism. Will the Church be content to merely peacefully co-exist with other religions, or can a deeper theologically-based unity be approached?

To analyze this controversy and offer a direction for ecclesiology, I will use the work of Bernard Lonergan. Lonergan's method leads to a practical common aim for theology and the Church, and seeks to arrive at truth in theology by attending to various tasks in the theological process, which he names functional specialties. One of the aims of the method is to uncover the reasons for differences in theological positions and explore the roots of the differences and their implications for theological developments. The aim is pastoral, to lead the Church to responsible communications. This method serves the purpose of analyzing the controversy in the way that I hope: to uncover the reason for the problem between the CDF and the theology of Jacques Dupuis that will lead to an answer to what this means for the Church.

Lonergan's theological method arises out of the human ability to find meaning authentically and responsibly. Its aim is to discover the truth in theology which should impact the manner in which the Church communicates to the world. Lonergan names the functional specialties as ways of approaching theology so as to eliminate bias and

overcome disagreement that obstruct us from the truth. The functional specialties will be more fully defined in chapter four, but it may be said that their purpose is to arrive at a theological position that communicates an unbiased and converted theology. The functional specialties are stages in a process of theology that corresponds to Lonergan's cognitional theory, whereby one is converted through a progression of consciousness and realms of meaning. Therefore, the functional specialties themselves hinge on conversion as the basis of the theological construction. They differ from field specialties insofar as they do not rely on content to determine the theology, but the horizon of the theologian, which is developed by the transcendental process and then guides it.

The results envisaged are not confined categorically to some particular field or subject, but regard any result that could be intended by the completely open transcendental notions. Where other methods aim at meeting the exigencies and exploiting the opportunities proper to particular fields, transcendental method is concerned with meeting the exigencies and exploiting the opportunities presented by the human mind itself. It is a concern that is both foundational and universally significant and relevant.²⁴

I will explore the ways in which Lonergan's transcendental method can aid in the analysis of this controversy. I want to show how the functional specialties reveal the ecclesiological implications of the Dupuis controversy with the CDF. At the heart of this study lies the mission of the Church. Lonergan's method leads to a real call for the Church, and so I appeal to this method as a way to dissect the controversy over Dupuis'

²⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 14.

theology of religious pluralism, especially since Dupuis built upon the ecclesiology of Vatican II in his own method.

Lonergan's functional specialties, especially dialectics and foundations, sought to overcome bias in theology and thus to develop an authentic and converting theology. The key to Lonergan's method is, ultimately, conversion. The theological method aims to discover the truth of revelation and communicate it responsibly and, ultimately, transform society. Lonergan explains that this method adds nothing new to theology but is the dynamic unfolding of attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility; in this way, then, it elucidates theology.²⁵ It is a method which heightens consciousness that brings to light our conscious and intentional operations. It seems that this method can be of great use in a changing world with disagreements over the meaning of revelation and salvation, and especially as we come to understand in new ways what it means to be human vis-à-vis scientific, cultural, and political advancement. These terms will be more fully defined in chapter four.

Individual, ecclesial, and societal transformation is the aim of the transcendental method. But we must approach our theological investigation in terms of conversion. For Lonergan, conversion is not an isolated or individual event. It is a process moved forward through particular moments. It is profound enough to change one's gaze, "release the symbols that penetrate to the depths of his [*sic*] psyche." Conversion is communal and historical, and as such gives rise to foundations which "guide the

²⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 14-16.

remaining specialties concerned with doctrines, systematic, and communications.”²⁶

Lonergan seeks a method that unites theology with religion, for theology to be relevant and meaningful in “real life.” But to identify theology with religion, liturgy, and prayer, is to revert to earliest Christianity, a situation which no longer exists. To integrate theology with religion in this contemporary period is a matter not of “preaching to ancient Antioch, Corinth, or Rome,” but of acknowledging the separation that has occurred between theology and religion and overcoming the contemporary problems with communication that continue to divide them. Unity, then, is achieved through an interdependent process of the functional specialties that move through the stages toward communication. For Lonergan, theology is made concrete in history, and cannot occur authentically without regard to its place in history and the lived experience of the Christian. Theology must come into unity with religion in real life, not remain contented with formulations that developed within a context that no longer exist. “These [functional specialties] interact with one another as theology endeavors to make its contribution towards meeting the needs of Christian living, actuating its potentialities, and taking advantage of the opportunities offered by world history.”²⁷ Thus we must consider the historical situation we face as a generation charged with carrying forth the Christian mission. One element of our historical context is the shared seeking of truth

²⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 132.

²⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 144-5.

with our non-Christian neighbors. To be responsible, theology must consider this and indeed integrate it with real Christian life.

The dispute between the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the theology of Jacques Dupuis seems to exemplify the problem about which Lonergan writes. As Jacques Dupuis' death precluded further dialogue on this matter or a possible resolution, it is left to others to pick up this theme and determine the course of the Church in light of his scholarship and suggestions. This reflection must also consider the position of the CDF in its preservation of the traditional language and its felt responsibility to communicate what it understands to be a "statement of the Church's teaching on certain aspects of...doctrinal truths, and as a refutation of erroneous or harmful opinions."²⁸ This project, then, aims to discover, through insights gained through the functional specialties, a clearer understanding of this dispute over Dupuis' work and the implications for the Church in a world which will grow ever more pluralistic.

Lonergan's transcendental method offers not a recipe-book or manual for a sequential theological process, but identifies an approach that brings theological reflection into the important realm of religious meaning. Lonergan's method is at once a process of ongoing conversion and theological discovery. As I will describe more

²⁸ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Notification," Preface.

extensively in chapter four, conversion is intellectual, moral, and religious.²⁹ The conversion process involves a radical transformation. The theological method therefore yields a converted theological position that culminates in communications. A converted theology produces authentic religious communications, and it *must* be authentic, for it is in this way that religion can effectively transform and convert the world. Lonergan, in his introduction to *Method in Theology*, says, “A theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix.”³⁰ The functional specialties together are intended to be part of the whole in the process. Lonergan stresses the necessity of all of the specialties, as doing one without the other seven will leave the work incomplete (and thus biased). This study, then, will aim to achieve what Lonergan intended for the transcendental method, to consider this controversy using each specialty to the degree that it is needed to uncover the root of the problem.

Of special importance in addressing conflicts is dialectic, the material for which, says Lonergan, is conflict. Dialectic addresses conflicts. Lonergan explains that first we must discover what kind of conflict it is. He says that differences “may lie in religious sources, in the religious traditions, in the pronouncements of authorities, or in the writings of theologians.” Some differences are not dialectical but may be resolved by uncovering fresh data, while others require intellectual, moral, or religious conversion.³¹

²⁹ Robert Doran, SJ, would also offer a fourth mode of conversion: psychic, a notion which Lonergan approved. See Robert Doran’s essay, “What Does Lonergan Mean by Conversion?” *Lonergan Resource*, <http://www.lonerganresource.com/lectures.php> (accessed 22 June 2013).

³⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, xi.

³¹ Lonergan, *Method*, 235.

Part of the process of this paper will be to determine the nature of the conflict and uncover its roots. The objective of this will be to unearth what is real and sound in the approaches of the opposition and to unveil what is not. “Christianity has nothing to lose from a purge of unsound reasons, of *ad hoc* explanations, of the stereotypes that body forth suspicions, resentments, hatreds, malice.”³² More importantly, this analysis will reveal what the conflict itself tells about the unity of theology and religion and, moreover, about the expectations for the contemporary Church.

Naturally, then, this project will look closely at Lonergan’s last functional specialty, communications. While all the functional specialties are the methods that bear fruit which the Church is meant to communicate, there is a special relationship between dialectic and communications. The goal of communications is to create a community with common meaning.

As common meaning constitutes community, so divergent meaning divides it. Such division may amount to no more than a diversity of culture and the stratification of individuals into classes of higher and lower competence. The serious division is the one that arises from the presence and absence of intellectual, moral, or religious conversion.³³

Dialectic gives rise to the function of communication insofar as it “assembles differences, classifies them, goes to their roots, and pushes them to extremes by developing alleged positions while reversing alleged counterpositions.”³⁴

³² Lonergan, *Method*, 130.

³³ Lonergan, *Method*, 357.

³⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 365.

Lonergan speaks of the Church in its orientation to the rest of the world. He often refers to the Church as a process...a structured process, an out-going process, a redemptive process. The wholeness not only of the Church but also of society depends on these processes of the Church. The Church is also a process of self-constitution, which perfects itself through communication. Ultimately, the Church is meant to bring theology in unity with the social sciences to aid the Church to become “a fully conscious process of self-constitution.”³⁵

Finally, I will conclude with the lessons learned by the controversy. What does this mean for the direction of the Church? Can we learn anything about where the Church intends to go in the ages to come? Can we learn that the Church should adopt more than just a stance on the relationship with other religions, and take a look at a theology of pluralism that will be harmonious with existing and foundational Church doctrines? I believe that Lonergan’s method leads him to an idea about the process of the Church in the world, or the Church as process. His historicist approach to ecclesiology allows these questions to be shaped in terms of the universality of revelation and the continuous process of humankind in history. Insofar as Lonergan sees the Church as a process, his method allows us to look at this controversy in terms of how it informs this self-constituting, outgoing process, which is the Church. I believe that analyzing this controversy through Lonergan’s method will exemplify Lonergan’s ideas about the differences between the classicist and historicist positions.

³⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 262-264.

The difference between the two [worldviews] are enormous, for they differ in their apprehension of man [*sic*], in their account of the good, and in the role they ascribe to the Church in the world. But those differences are not immediately theological. They are differences in horizon, in total mentality. For either side really to understand the other is a major achievement, and, when such understanding is lacking, the interpretation of Scripture or of the other theological sources is most likely to be at cross purposes.³⁶

I shall look, then, at the differences between the theological meaning and purposes that run on both sides of this controversy and determine what its nature is, in light of Lonergan's idea of differences, of communication, and of the Church. Lonergan says that "universals do not change; they are just what they are defined to be; and to introduce a new definition is, not to change the old universal, but to place another new universal beside the old one."³⁷ I believe that Jacques Dupuis had no intention of abandoning the universal truth of Jesus Christ, and that the CDF wanted to ensure that this universal remained intact. This controversy, then, explores this idea of universal truths and the way in which they are communicated. Lonergan's transcendental method provides the hermeneutic for sorting through a controversy that relies on the communication of one universal truth in light of a dynamic human history.

³⁶ Bernard Lonergan. "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical-Mindedness," *A Second Collection*, ed. William F.J. Ryan, S.J. and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1974), 2.

³⁷ Lonergan. "Transition," 3.

CHAPTER TWO

JACQUES DUPUIS' CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Part One: Why a Christian Theology of Pluralism?

Throughout its history, Christian theology has been constrained by the paradox of the Christian idea of salvation: the universal Logos has entered into humanity to effect the possibility of salvation for *all*, while at the same time it is believed that salvation is for those who claim faith in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, who lived in a particular part of the world for a short lifetime. The paradox lies in the conflict between the universality and the particularity of Christ that has resulted from traditional Christological and ecclesiological formulations. Contemporary Christian theology offers a few alternatives to the question over the possibility of salvation for “others.”

Jacques Dupuis found in Christianity an opportunity to construct a theology that builds on the shared experience of God among the different religions. Dupuis found room within the parameters of Christian theology for salvation for those outside the Christian tradition. At the heart of Dupuis' theology of pluralism is God's plan for all of humankind.

This chapter will describe how this problem has been addressed throughout different periods of Christianity. Dupuis considers how Jesus himself handled religious

diversity in his own life, and suggests that this perspective must ground Christian theology and mission to reflect a more inclusive stance, reflecting that of Christ himself. Dupuis viewed the task of the Church and its mission in light of the universal Christ acting in our particular history for the purpose of fulfilling God's covenant with humankind and to bring life into its fulfillment in the eschaton. He explored the multiplicity of religious beliefs in light of Christ's command: to build the Reign of God in this world.

Dupuis found the Catholic position on non-Christian faiths has ranged from complete exclusivism to relative inclusivism, and found room within the Church's own teachings for a Christian theology that views God's plan of salvation in an inclusive way, which respects the variance in religions without diminishing the constitutiveness of Christ or the necessity of the Church. His idea of "inclusive pluralism" is distinguished from other theologies of pluralism, such as those of John Hick or Paul Knitter, insofar as it maintains respect for the various traditions without compromising the traditional Christian belief in the fullness of truth contained in the revelation of Christ and the mediation of the Church as a universal sacrament of salvation. His theology aims to balance the universality of God's plan and the historical particularity of Jesus Christ.

Three important objectives become apparent in Dupuis' book. First and foremost, he strove to shape his theology of inclusive pluralism with absolute respect and deference to the biblical and traditional authority of the Catholic Church. Second, he strove to deepen the meaning of interreligious dialogue, to identify it as just the beginning of the task of the Christian Church in its treatment of other religions, and its engagement in authentic dialogue among the religions. Third, he wanted to offer a theology of pluralism

that would transform Christianity to reflect and proclaim the universal nature of salvation and not limit its inter-faith relationships to dialogue.

Dupuis' theology illustrates that over the history of the Church, the Christian relationship with non-Christians has been conditioned by historical context as well as the theological determination of the state of salvation for non-Christian. Dupuis, like many others, found that the twentieth century proved to offer improved relationships among the religions, but further, that Christian theology had broadened in light of the Church's explicit acceptance of other religions. Dupuis saw potential for ecclesiological reform from these new declarations on the relationship with non-Christians. In the twentieth century, due to a series of global events, greater understanding of global human solidarity likely gave rise to the Catholic Church's awakened sensitivity to building solidarity among the human community despite religious diversity, and to build unity without demanding uniformity. Before Vatican II, language about non-Christian religions began to soften, though it had far to go in validating the beliefs of non-Christians. Dupuis described Vatican II as a watershed for inter-religious relationships. The writings of Pope Paul VI, Vatican II, and Pope John Paul II demonstrated a clear evolution of inter-religious harmony. Vatican II offered a definitive contribution to a renewed spirit within the Church that would lead to meaningful theological exploration of salvation for those outside the Church. Dupuis explored the language of the post-conciliar work of the Church, and sought to construct the positive relationship between the Catholic Church and the non-Christian religions around the world.

The Twentieth Century and the Relationship with Non-Christians: Dialogue and Evangelization

In his essay “Interreligious Dialogue, a Challenge to Christian Identity,” Dupuis makes three central points:

1. Interreligious dialogue is a part of the evangelizing mission of the Church.
2. There is a theological foundation to interreligious dialogue.
3. There is fruit derived from the practice of interreligious dialogue through the challenges it poses.¹

Dupuis’ method offers new possibilities for evangelization. The central task of the Church is to proclaim the message of Christ to all. Historically this has taken shape in two ways in the Christian encounter with non-Christians: through dialogue and through evangelization (proclamation). Dupuis sees these two as both part of the saving mission of the Church, though in their historical practice, they have some distinctions.

There has been a shift in the discourse concerning the role of dialogue in the mission of the Church from Vatican II to the 1990s. Dupuis attributes this transformation to a shift in the attitude of the Catholic Church, according to its documents, toward non-Christians.

In the middle of the twentieth century, many church statements acknowledge that there exist “seeds” of goodness in other religious traditions. Yet there is an absence of explicit statements that the Church has a responsibility to define theologically its engagement with other faiths in light of the saving mission of Christ, outside of its task of evangelization. Later documents indicate a deeper theological relationship among Christians and non-Christians.

¹ Jacques Dupuis, “Interreligious Dialogue, a Challenge to Christian Identity,” *Swedish Missiological Themes* 92, no 1 (2004), 21.

According to Dupuis, *Nostra aetate* and *Lumen gentium* mention the “other” religions in a favorable manner, articulating that God, in ways known only to God, works mysteriously through other religions, and even acknowledges that the religious experience is authentic. Still, they maintain the superiority of the Catholic faith. Pope Paul VI wrote of the necessity for dialogue and respect for other faiths and offered the respectful acknowledgement of the “spiritual and moral values” and the “desire to join them in defending and promoting common ideals.” Yet he quickly continues to say that these faiths are of less value, but that hope remains that “all who seek God...will come to acknowledge [the one true religion].”² Certainly these statements offer a positive direction for interfaith relationships, but they indicate nothing of the Catholic Church’s own benefit from dialogue.

According to Dupuis, real dialogue results in authentic conversion to the other through receptivity to the other’s faith experience, as both share an even deeper conversion to God. Ecclesial documents do not favor such a reciprocal exchange, but allow an affirmation of some validity of other faiths, though, as the documents state, these faiths lack the fullness of access to God’s plan as long as they remain outside of the Christian religion. From this perspective, the true task of the Church is to extend friendship to other faiths, recognizing that God works in some fashion, though not in the fullest manner, in their religious traditions, but that ultimately, the goal and hope is conversion of the others to the Christian faith. While the sentiment is relatively positive toward other religions, conversion to Christianity is the ideal outcome. The Church

² Paul VI, *Ecclesiam suam* [Encyclical Letter on the Church], 6 August 1964, sec. 107, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_06081964_ecclesiam_en.html (accessed 25 June 2013).

claims its higher status over these others based on its theology that others are oriented to Christianity, but have some incomplete form of what Christianity alone possesses: access to God's full revelation and plan of salvation. Dialogue, therefore, is not intended in this model to be an event which generates mutual conversion; rather, it serves the task of proclamation of the Gospel. Indeed, the Church has recognized the duty to convert others to its community of believers, but nowhere in its history is the obligation to convert *to one another* or to adopt the "others'" practices into Christian practice. Theologically, this would be unnecessary; there is no need to convert to the other's experience when the Christian holds the fullness of revelation and possibility of salvation. Conversion to any faith outside of Christianity would bring no ultimate spiritual gain.

In 1984, the Secretariat for Non-Christians published *Dialogue and Mission*, which described interreligious dialogue as a part of the evangelizing mission of the Church. Here the mission is presented as a "single, but complex and articulated reality," which identifies "dialogue in which Christians meet the followers of other religious traditions in order to walk together towards truth and to work together in projects of common concern," and for "announcing and catechesis."³ To Dupuis, it showed significant improvement, by comparison to earlier statements, that dialogue is incorporated into the task of evangelization, a significant moment for the Catholic position in its understanding of the role that dialogue can be part of the task of the evangelizing mission of the Church.

³ Dupuis, "Interreligious Dialogue, a Challenge," 13.

In 1990, Pope John Paul II authored *Redemptoris missio*, a work which demonstrated his deeply held commitment to the mission of proclaiming the Gospel. He describes how his travel “to the ends of the earth” was part of the missionary call of his pontificate through the response to the call of St. Paul to preach the Gospel. This writing, he said, was likewise “devoted to the urgency of missionary activity.”⁴ Proclamation “aims at guiding people to explicit knowledge of what God has done for all men and women in Jesus Christ, and to invite them to be disciples of Jesus through becoming members of the Church.”⁵

Pope John Paul II was instrumental in bridging the earlier theologies of dialogue established mid-century and more recent theologies of pluralism. Working past an ecclesiocentric dialogue, he grounded his approach to dialogue in God’s universal presence and ongoing activity, and found true religious value even through the religious practices and prayers of non-Christian faiths. John Paul’s work consistently presents the idea that the Holy Spirit affects not only the belief of individuals, but entire religions in whatever beliefs and traditions lead them to their own pursuit of truth and expression of their faithful response. The Spirit works in the entire economy of salvation, whereby all humanity is unified in our origin and destiny. This is the mystery of salvation which must serve as the theological foundation of dialogue. The differences among the religions, according to John Paul II, are less significant than the unity of all humanity,

⁴ John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio* [Encyclical Letter On the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate], 7 December, 1990, sec. 1, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html (accessed 28 June 2013).

⁵ Dupuis, “Interreligious Dialogue, a Challenge,” 25. See also John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, 81.

which is implicitly found through our common origin and destination, all which is God's design. Further, we are unified in the common direction with the constant and indiscriminate help of the Spirit of God.⁶ Thus, in John Paul's theology, humans share religious solidarity by the *mystery of unity* through God's design for humanity; we are then building on what is already present when we build upon the "seeds of truth" laid in these other religions when we engage in authentic dialogue. Dialogue is constitutive of the mission of the Church insofar as the Church takes part in God's design for all humanity and the shared experience of pursuing this truth.

By the end of the twentieth century, dialogue was more commonly accepted as a constitutive part of the mission of the Church, and the evangelizing mission more broadly considered as part of the total missionary presence of the Church for the world. According to *Dialogue and Proclamation*, written in 1991 by the Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples, the two are identified as follows.

"Dialogue" is defined as an integral part of the mission, and indicates all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment in obedience to truth and respect for freedom.

"Announcement" or "Proclamation" is the communication of the Gospel message, the mystery of salvation realized by God for all in Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit.

⁶ Dupuis. "Interreligious Dialogue, a Challenge," 30. See also John Paul II, Address to the Representatives of the Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities and of the World Religions at Assisi World Day of Prayer for Peace, 27 October, 1986, sec. 3-5, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1986/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19861027_prayer-peace-assisi-final_en.html (accessed 25 June, 2013).

It offers an invitation to enter, through baptism, into the community of believers, which is the Church.⁷

This document offers an explicit statement of the relationship between dialogue and proclamation, and how both are constitutive tasks of the Church.

Interreligious dialogue and proclamation...are both authentic elements of the Church's evangelizing mission. Both are legitimate and necessary. They are intimately related, but not interchangeable. The two activities remain distinct, but...one and the same local Church, one and the same person, can be diversely engaged in both.⁸

Dupuis notes that the change in thinking reflected in the official documents of the Church *orient dialogue toward proclamation*, but yet each keeps its own distinction.⁹ The theological shifts that distinguish dialogue and proclamation in the Church's mission reflect the distinct outcome of each. In dialogue, different traditions have as their objective a "convergence...to a deeper shared conversion to God and to others."

Proclamation, on the other hand, aims more precisely to conversion to Christianity.¹⁰ This follows the long-standing belief of the Church that all religions represent human religiosity, though Christianity is the only one that is truly supernatural and represents the only true religion. Vatican II pronounced that other faiths may benefit from the Church's evangelizing mission, and because they are "naturally" inclined to seek the truth, they are

⁷ Dupuis, "Interreligious Dialogue, a Challenge," 23.

⁸ Pontificum Concilium pro Dialogo inter Religiones, "Dialogue and Proclamation," 19 May, 1991, sec. 77, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html (accessed 25 June 2013). See also Dupuis, "Interreligious Dialogue, a Challenge," 25.

⁹ Dupuis, "Interreligious Dialogue, a Challenge," 25.

¹⁰ Dupuis, "Interreligious Dialogue, a Challenge," 22.

not excluded from God's offer of salvation. As such, they are thereby ordered to the Catholic Church.¹¹

Deepening the Christian's own sense of identity and uniqueness serves to define religious boundaries. The Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences notes this as a matter of faith identity and identification with the other in interfaith dialogue:

While proclamation is the expression of its awareness of being in mission, dialogue is the expression of its awareness of God's presence and action outside its boundaries. The action of the Church finds itself in a field of forces controlled by these two poles of divine activity. Proclamation is the affirmation of and witness to God's action in oneself. Dialogue is the openness and attention to the mystery of God's action in the other believer.¹²

Proclamation has been associated with evangelizing the other in order to bring him or her to the conversion to Christian belief. Dialogue has maintained its distinction from the other and remained content to discuss differences, without an aim to synchronize the traditions or to change another's tradition, especially the Christian tradition.

Dupuis notes that the constitutiveness of Christ in one's theological framework determines the outcome of dialogue. He distinguishes his own thought from that of Knitter in their formulation of Christ's role, and how this in turn shapes the objective of dialogue. According to Dupuis, Knitter would argue that a constitutive Christology rules out the possibility of genuine dialogue, and it also renders it impossible to build an ecclesiology and the theology of mission oriented to the Reign of God. Further, Dupuis finds that according to Knitter's theology, when Christ is defined as the unsurpassable

¹¹ Dupuis, "Interreligious Dialogue, a Challenge," 22.

¹² Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences, "Theses on Interreligious Dialogue: An Essay on Pastoral Theological Reflection," *Papers*, 48, April 1987, http://www.fabc.org/fabc%20papers/fabc_paper_48.pdf (accessed 25 June, 2013).

criterion for salvation, this is incompatible with Kingdom-centered understanding of the Church. In Dupuis' view, Knitter's theology reduces the *entire* mission of the Church to dialogue because Knitter rejects a constitutive Christology.¹³

Against this, Dupuis argues that a constitutive Christology need not be exclusive, and that in a Kingdom-centered ecclesiology which proclaims Christ as constitutive for its purpose in the world, dialogue is possible as long as it is related to, but not reduced to, proclamation. In this framework, dialogue is, as *Dialogue and Proclamation* suggests, oriented to proclamation. In this model, when one engages authentically in dialogue, one *naturally* proclaims the belief in this Christ and the Church whose foundation is to serve the same Kingdom of God in which both dialogue partners share.

In a Christian theology of pluralism, the objective of Christian communication is a bit different than the previous, straightforward goal of converting all to Christianity, however, and so dialogue is understood as a process of mutual conversion. Dupuis' paradigm considers conversion in a new way, and thus dialogue and proclamation are nuanced accordingly.

Conversion to the Other

Authentic dialogue leads the Christian to evaluate his or her beliefs and begin theological inquiry using an inductive, rather than a deductive, method. When one truly engages the other in an act of sincere dialogue, one must reflect on his or her own Christian identity and beliefs while simultaneously concerning him or herself with the

¹³ Dupuis. "Interreligious Dialogue, a Challenge," 27. See also Paul F. Knitter, *Jesus and the Other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996), 133-5.

identity and status of the other. Insofar as this method is directed by a hermeneutic of universality, it presumes an inductive approach.

With regard to the theology of religions, the ‘first act’ of doing theology must be a serious practice of interreligious dialogue and taking seriously the religious experience met personally in the lives of the ‘others’ with whom one comes in contact through such interreligious dialogue. That encounter, if true and authentic, cannot fail to raise serious questions for a Christian believer. These are indeed the questions – not abstract but quite concrete – that demand of the theology of religions a detailed response based on a sincere reinterpretation of the revealed datum.¹⁴

Dupuis describes how theology of dialogue has evolved in the Church’s mission. In the twenty-seven years between *Ecclesiam suam*, in which Pope Paul begins to discuss the “circles of dialogue,” and *Dialogue and Proclamation*, which portrays dialogue as oriented toward proclamation of the Christian message, the Church’s call to dialogue takes new shape. As our acceptance of religious pluralism has grown, so must our theology; this should reflect that not only do we understand that God’s offer of salvation is universal, but that Jesus Christ is the constitutive mediator of that salvation universally. The Church’s task is always one of communicating the Reign of God, and so dialogue always converts one to the salvation that God has offered through the human encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. The Church, with Christ as its root and guide, serves as the ongoing mediator, and so authentic dialogue always orients one to the Church, because dialogue is a conversion to God and other, to God’s universal offer of salvation and the proclamation of the Church of the universal Reign of God.

Pluralism within Christian Theology

The need for a Christian theology of pluralism is ecclesiological, social, and

¹⁴ Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Pluralism* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002), 8.

theological. Dupuis saw a need to develop such a construction based out of his own experiences and worldview. His work in India immersed him in other traditions, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism. While remaining loyal to his Catholic faith and the Jesuit tradition, he found such value in these other religions that he felt compelled to try to aim toward reconciliation between the Christian idea of salvation and the traditions of the “others.”

Gerald O’Collins summarizes the aim of Dupuis’ work with three questions:

1. Can the adherents of other religions be saved?
2. If one answers yes, do the elements of truth and grace found in these religions mean that the adherents can be saved, not despite, but through these elements?
3. If one answers yes, do these religions enjoy a positive meaning in God’s one plan of salvation for all human beings?

The affirmation of each of these is what led Dupuis to the development of what he named “inclusive pluralism.”¹⁵ For Dupuis, “inclusive pluralism” refers to a model¹⁶ which falls neither on the side of extreme inclusivism nor pluralism, but maintains that while one holds that Jesus Christ is the universal savior, one also affirms religions other than Christianity are included in God’s plan of salvation and have salvific value apart from explicit desire to become Christian.¹⁷

The questions listed above are not unique to Dupuis. Dupuis’ unique contributions lie in his method of framing his theology within the Christian tradition’s

¹⁵ Gerald O’Collins, “Jacques Dupuis’s Contributions to Interreligious Dialogue,” *Theological Studies* 64 (2003), 389-90.

¹⁶ Dupuis wants to distinguish his model of inclusive pluralism from the traditional notion of paradigm. He understands paradigms as strictly exclusive of one another, while models he sees as able to combine and complement each other. See *Toward a Christian Theology of Pluralism* 204-5, and Dupuis, “The Truth Will Make You Free: The Theology of Religious Pluralism Revisited,” *Louvain Studies* 24 (1999), 226-7.

¹⁷ Jacques Dupuis, “The Truth Will Make You Free,” *Louvain Studies* 24 (1999), 226.

paradigm of revelation and salvation, keeping Christ and the Church as central and necessary, and avoiding the extremely pluralist or exclusivist positions. His method seeks to integrate an inclusive pluralism while preserving the integrity of the foundations of the Christian faith in terms of revelation, salvation, and the necessity of the Church as a means for universal salvation.

The Church in a Multireligious World: A New Challenge for the Twenty-first Century

Dupuis' theology reviews the history of the axiom *Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus* and demonstrates that the Catholic Church and the world must move definitively beyond this position, not only because of our current historical situation of newfound global relationships, but theologically, through the self-identified role of the Church in the world. A theology of religions is necessary as an expression of the Church's response to this changing world dynamic. According to Dupuis, the twentieth century

has perhaps been the cruelest in human history...it is clear that a true purification of memories...is needed by all parties, if we wish to reach a mutual renewed attitude, characterized by a true and sincere encounter between the various religious traditions... memory can be healed and purified through a shared determination to begin new constructive mutual relations of dialogue and collaboration of encounter.¹⁸

We, as a human race, must collaboratively engage the divine as we strive to co-exist peacefully in this life and for the future of all life.

The theological shift at Vatican II that offered new exploration into religious pluralism would require a re-visioning of the universal scope of Christ, the Church, revelation, and salvation. The problem of particularity was becoming a hindrance to a theology that must function for humanity in a global worldview.

¹⁸ Jacques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002), 5.

Today's multiethnic, multicultural, and multireligious world requires from all parts a qualitative leap proportional to our situation, if we wish to have in the future open and positive mutual relations between peoples, cultures and religions of the world, relations, in other words, of dialogue and collaboration – no short of an encounter rather than the confrontation of a past now behind us. No more biased interpretations of data and facts about others and about the religious traditions of others; no more stubborn misunderstandings due to ignorance or malice. The aim is a conversion to the other that can open the way to sincere and profitable relations. Nothing short of a true conversion of persons will suffice for achieving true peace between the religions of the world, which is a necessary and essential condition for peace between peoples.¹⁹

Ultimately, we ask what this will mean for the future of the Church. As we will see in the following sections, this long-standing “problem” of religious pluralism for theology and the Church's communication has handed down a tradition of ambiguity regarding the theological characterization of non-Christians and the possibility of their salvation. In an age when global communication has demanded a redefinition of our global relationships, and when the human community faces a dire need for world-wide cooperation, we are faced with a fundamental need to build religious unity in order to carry out the mission of Christ, to build the Kingdom of God on Earth. The following sections will explore the ways in which this has been framed in the past, and the reason why Dupuis saw an urgent need to reconstruct Christian theology that frees the Catholic Church to move past its historically-transmitted limitations and authentically collaborate on theological grounds with our neighbor religions to carry on Christ's work.

Theology is constantly charged with the task of putting language about God into meaningful dialogue with the human experience in every age. The Church must take up this challenge as it identifies itself in a pluralistic age, not as a competitor for the search

¹⁹ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 7.

for truth, but as a collaborator in it.

To begin with, Christian theology is challenged to define dialogue such that it that allows for authentic engagement that serves mutual conversion. The idea of mutual conversion may seem threatening to the Christian consciousness, but authentic dialogue need not require a detachment from the Christian conviction in Christ's constitutiveness in salvation, but only an openness to the experience of the divine in the other. According to Dupuis, there are three fundamental challenges in order to pursue authentic dialogue:

1. The resistance to absolutize what is not absolute;
2. To find in the other a true path to God;
3. To allow ourselves to be mutually enriched, requiring the recognition in the co-participation and construction of the shared Reign of God in which we all participate.²⁰

Dupuis is a theologian among many who understood the reciprocal spiritual benefits of dialogue, not to mention the potential theological developments. First, it enriches one's own belief. Christian faith may be made even more meaningful by discovering "at greater depth certain aspects, certain dimensions, of the Divine Mystery that they had perceived less clearly and that have been communicated less clearly by the Christian tradition." It will also allow them to escape prejudices or misconceptions that limited their own experience and pursuit of the divine.²¹ This is required not only of the individual Christian, but in the consciousness and language of theology and religion.

The Christian faith must adhere to the tradition handed down, but must evaluate it in light of our new knowledge of the world and our multiform experiences of the divine. Theological currents must evolve in response to sociological, cultural, political, and

²⁰ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 33-38.

²¹ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 39.

scientific changes. This is always the task of theology, and this was the renewed commitment of the Church to the world at Vatican II.

The Church faces many pastoral challenges, and theology takes on the special task of interpreting the revelation of God in human history to aid the Church's communication and service. Theologians must re-articulate the meaning of the multiform ways God is present in human history in terms of Christ's offer of salvation to all, and this theology must become evident in the way the Church universally embraces other religions as sharers in the human response to God and participants in the one and same Kingdom. The following sections will explore the ways in which the Catholic Church has treated this "problem" of the other faiths and demonstrate how Dupuis has responded to this challenge with his construction of a theology of inclusive pluralism.

The following section treats the Church's assessment of the "others" and the ongoing attitude and relationship of the Catholic Church with the non-Christian religions. We will see how this has influenced doctrinal formulations, and how these shaped our contemporary situation and this challenge for contemporary theology. We will conclude the chapter with a vision of the Church in light of the theology of pluralism as constructed by Dupuis.

Part Two: Historical Summary of the Catholic Church and Non-Christians

Dupuis constructs his theology with careful attention to the history of the Catholic Church's teachings. Dupuis notes that both favorable and unfavorable attitudes have prevailed through the different periods in the history of the Church's official language on other religions, which he understands to be due in some part to contextual influence. At each of these points in history, the Church has had to address the problem of Christ's

universality and particularity, the ubiquitous presence of God's grace in the world and in the religions, and the particular mediation of grace through the Christian Church.

Dupuis notes that in the history of Christianity, three main themes and quite a variety of subthemes represent the manner in which the official documents of the Catholic Church have treated the matter of salvation and other religions.²² He has categorized the many statements found in ecclesial documents throughout the Church's history, which reveal the extent to which the issue of religious pluralism has been addressed. He has categorized these and published them in his book co-edited with Josef Neuener, which provides an exhaustive collection of doctrinal documents. According to his classification, three categories regarding the Church's treatment of religious pluralism have prevailed through the Church's history: religions in relation to the Gospel, the religions in themselves, and the Christian attitude toward world religions. These categories include topics such as Judaism in early Christianity, the relationship of the religions to the economy of salvation, the value of these religions compared to Christianity, the presence of the Holy Spirit in other religions, and the value of positive relationships among Christians and non-Christians.

Below is a cursory look at Dupuis' analysis of the way the Church and theology dealt with the "problem" of other religions in different periods in history: early Christian theology, the Middle Ages, the Nineteenth century, and the period around Vatican II and beyond. As he says, the relationship between Christianity and the others is nothing new, and has been a matter of theological discussion since the dawn of the faith. Our

²² Josef Neuener and Jacques Dupuis, eds., *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church* (Staten Island: Alba, 1996), 379.

contemporary method, however, should be mindful of the conditions that influenced the theological positions that have become more or less fixed over time, and what this suggests for our current and future methods of theologies of pluralism. Although this is a general overview, it provides some context for the various statements that have shaped the history of the Church's treatment of this matter.

Early Christianity and Logos Theology

In nascent Christianity, religious pluralism was quite common and accepted. The reality of a multitude of religions did not seem to pose as much of a problem for early Christians, who, in spite of pluralism, were committed to their faith and their commission by Christ to spread the news about the Reign of God. As Christian theology began to take shape, the central concerns included what to make of God's presence in the world, Jesus' significance in revealing God's plan, and the meaning of salvation in light of the Christ-event.

While the early fathers opposed astrology and magical practices, pagan mythology, 'mystery religions,' middle- and neo-Platonic cosmological ideas, they were favorable to many aspects of religion and culture in the Hellenistic period. The attempts to make sense of God's presence in the world before and after the Christ-event was worked out through a Logos-theology, which viewed Christ's eternal presence as much as his particular presence as the historical Jesus.²³ At this time, Christian doctrinal boundaries were in the early stages of formation, and so dialogue with "other" religions was natural, and even aided in defining Christian belief as well as its interfaith relationships. Logos theology helped clarify both a Christology that made sense of Jesus'

²³ Dupuis, *Toward*, 54-55.

two natures as well as a Trinitarian view of monotheism, and redefined the divine-human relationship through a newfound definition of salvation history. The early theologians had to place the revelation of the Christian God in the context of human life, and therefore, theology from the start is *necessarily* a theology of religions.

Early Logos theology offered possibilities not only for a theology of pluralism but also a theology of history. The question of Christ as a historical event and the proclamation of the Reign of God suggested something new to the early Christian community about previous conceptions and experiences of the transcendent. One task of the early Christian Church was to explain how Christ pre-existed the historical Jesus, which necessitated a dialogue with pre-Christian religion. Dupuis explains how some of the early fathers conceived of Logos-theology, which informed the Christian understanding of the Christ-event and the situation of the Reign of God to this day.

Justin Martyr explained his Logos theology as a differentiated or partial view of the Logos, whereby all people share in him, though sometimes only partially. Others who have received the Logos in his full revelation in the flesh have received him fully. The Logos is thus present at least in part, as a seed planted, but is only fully revealed to some.

From this explanation we have inherited a teaching that Christ's revelation is full only through the Christian Church, although we must admit that since the Logos transcends the historical manifestation of the Word, the revelation is partial and fragmentary outside the boundaries of the Church or the history of the incarnation.²⁴

²⁴ Dupuis, *Toward*, 60.

For Irenaeus, the universal revelation of the Logos suggests that the Logos is always present and is realized through the incarnation of Christ. Christ's historical presence is confirmation and guarantee of the historical nature of the presence of the Logos in all of time. While the Logos was always revealed and present, the presence of the incarnate Logos made the Logos humanly and physically visible, though this does not mean that the Logos was not present without this visibility.²⁵

Clement of Alexandria views philosophy itself as a revelation and covenant with God. Philosophy as it has manifested in Greek thought and culture was a way for Clement to understand God speaking to humankind. This philosophy prepared them for the fullness of philosophy which was fully revealed and understood through the philosophy of Christ.²⁶

The logos-theology of these three theologians highlighted by Dupuis suggests the common theological understanding of the already-present revelation of God and its manifestation in human history, through creation and through cultures. Each perspective conveys that the Logos makes God's word part of the human experience, and the incarnation brings a new perspective and experience, a fuller understanding of what it means to be in the created world in a constant relationship with its creator.

Salvation Outside the Church as a Part of Christian History

The axiom *Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus* has significantly contributed to the history of the relationship of the Christian Church to non-Christians. Augustine, for one, has clearly supported this idea, though many would argue that this has never been an

²⁵ Dupuis, *Toward*, 65.

²⁶ Dupuis, *Toward*, 67.

official teaching of the Catholic Church. How, then, does the Church treat this idea of salvation for those outside the Church?

Dupuis notes that there are quite explicit statements in the New Testament about the necessity of faith for attaining salvation, and that this has developed into the notion that apart from the Christian community, there is no access to the revelation and salvation through Christ. This has resulted in the Church's adoption of a rigid position through the centuries of Christianity, though the necessity of faith in Christ may be interpreted differently when viewed in context. Augustine acknowledged that Christ has been present and revealed in ages preceding the apostolic church; therefore, the real concern is how to define the role of the Church in mediating salvation, if we accept that Christ's revelation and offer of salvation has been available to those who have lived in Christ's friendship outside the Christian Church.²⁷

One must consider the background of the early proponents of the axiom. In the days preceding Augustine, the axiom was expressed in various ways out of a sense of unity for the Church and to impose guilt on those who dissented from their bishop or from the common Christian belief. For example, Ignatius of Antioch maintained that unity with Christ depended on unity with the bishop. Similarly, Irenaeus, against the Gnostics, proclaimed that separation from the Church is really a deprivation from the fullness of the Spirit and so there would naturally be no salvation without ecclesial communion, even for martyrs. Origen, too, explained that the Church, which holds the blood of Christ, which is the sign for redemption, is the community *only* through which one is transformed from his or her former life of sin and cleansed and saved.

²⁷ Dupuis, *Toward*, 85.

St. Cyprian, combatting heresy and schism, is one of the more vocal adherents to the axiom. In his writings he aimed to preserve the unity of the Church by laying guilt upon those who were unwilling to respect the authority of the bishop. He admonished those who followed the ways of the schismatics and fervently denied that participation in any other community than the Catholic one was a valid communion with Christ. He was addressing those who had consciously turned from the authority of the Church, claiming this sin could only be forgiven through confession through the Church. His statement that salvation is impossible outside of the Church, however, is addressed to these “heretics” who have *willingly* separated themselves from the Church, and seems not to condemn those who have not heard of the Gospel.²⁸

Though each of these early fathers understands the Word of God to have preceded the institution of the Church, they all suggest that through the community, the Trinity is actively present in fullness, and is therefore the only avenue by which one may receive the presence of the revealed and saving Christ and Spirit.²⁹ It is clear that preserving unity in the early Church was the basis for the axiom. It should also be noted that in this period of Church history, as the early leaders were trying to evangelize people while preserving unity among the faithful, they also faced the problem of persecution. The urgency with which they persuaded people to the Church makes sense given their commitment to their faith and their situation as the persecuted minority. One might find this sort of communication logical in light of the challenges they faced as an emerging

²⁸ Dupuis, *Toward*, 88. See also Francis Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2002), 22-23. See also St. Cyprian, *The Unity of the Catholic Church*, sec. 6, EWTN Library Archives, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/sources/unity.txt> (accessed 25 June, 2013).

²⁹ Dupuis, *Toward*, 87.

world religion.

As the institution gained strength, we find that the axiom was communicated in more absolute terms. While documents throughout Christianity's history follow the thought of the earlier fathers, it was becoming more firmly communicated that belief in Christ and participation in the Christian community was the only means to know God fully. Much of this thought emerged from the theological developments of Augustine in the fifth century.

Augustine strictly held that people may only be saved through Christ. Yet since Christ pre-existed the incarnation of Jesus, there is a possibility of salvation and revelation preceding the historical Catholic Church. Augustine held that once the Gospel had been preached and the Catholic Church established, however, it alone was the only revealer and mediator of salvation. Still, Augustine was aware the Church began at a certain place in history and Christ's revelatory activity preceded the Church. Since Christ is co-eternal with God, Augustine held that the revelation of God also preceded the incarnation of Christ.

Augustine acknowledged that God was part of the Hebrew community, and therefore Christ must have revealed God to this community. Because God has foreknowledge of those who will receive his Word and live justly according to it, this must have applied to the Hebrew people. If God was made known in some way to those who were worthy, even if outside Christian revelation, as it was to the Hebrews, it may be assumed that revelation may extend beyond the recorded salvation history of the Judeo-Christian tradition. By Augustine's conclusion, if God were not revealed to certain peoples, then it can be presumed that God foreknew that these people would not be

worthy.

For Augustine, then, the body of Christ consists of all who have been saved by their faith in Christ, who have Christ at their head, and of all who have ever lived justly in response to Christ before his historical revelation in Jesus. The Church, according to Augustine, began from Abel, “the first just man,” and consists of those who partake in Christ and live a just life.³⁰ Only these people were deemed worthy of salvation through Christ.

The possibility of salvation outside of baptism, however, only applied to those to whom Christ was revealed *before* the time of the Gospel. Afterwards, the full revelation was made available through the Gospels and it was presumed that it had been proclaimed universally. Anyone who knowingly remained outside of the Roman Catholic Church relinquished his or her salvation. Those that have separated themselves from the unity of the Catholic Church would have no access to salvation, as this was seen as the gravest sin. The only chance of salvation for them was to reunite their faith with that of the Roman Catholic Church. Likewise, anyone who misused his or her free will by rejecting the heard message of Christ faced the impossibility of salvation. Here Augustine specifically addressed the Jews, who knowingly rejected Christ’s revelation and refused to become united in the faith of the one Church.

Though it was widely believed by the fifth century that everyone in the world had had an opportunity to come to the Catholic faith, Augustine acknowledged that there may be some places in the world that had not yet had access to the Gospel or the Church. This

³⁰ Jacques Dupuis. *Toward*, 81; Dupuis here refers to Augustine, *City of God*. Abel’s role in Augustine’s *City of God* is prevalent throughout.

was proof for Augustine that the end of the world was not imminent, because God would want all to have an opportunity to hear the Gospel before inflicting eternal punishment. Augustine furthermore believed that where the Gospel had not been revealed, then God must not have deemed these people worthy of salvation. This would certainly be possible, he believed, since God would also not save any unbaptized, even innocent infants. For Augustine, since God foreknew the possibility of salvation for some, he would deny revelation to some, and therefore, all humanity would therefore be damned if not for the mercy of God.³¹

Ecclesiology in the Middle-Ages and Relationships among Christians and Non-Christians

Expression of dogmatic truth at a given epoch may reflect conceptions and the mentality proper to that period of history. Thus, if we are going to understand what the medieval popes and councils meant when they denied salvation to those outside the Church, we ought to try to penetrate their mentality, to grasp their unspoken assumptions and the things which they took for granted, which influenced their way of understanding and thus of expressing their faith.

Pope Innocent III in 1208 addressed separation of the Waldensians from the Catholic Church. His letter, which claims that there is no salvation outside the Church, emphasizes that the one Church is synonymous to the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Its emphasis on the Roman Catholic Church is revealing about the particular position of the Church at the time and how the threat of schism at that time compared to earlier periods.

In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council needed to address the problem of reducing the Church to a simple *congregatio fidelium*. It had to affirm the Catholic Church as a

³¹ Dupuis, *Toward*, 82-3.

visible sign and instrument in the world, emphasizing the sacramental and Eucharistic nature of the community. Here is reinforced the presence of the sacrifice of Christ during the Eucharist, and that participation in it is the only way by which one could attain salvation. At this time, the Church faced the Albigensians and Cathars, and had to restate its unique mediatory role in the salvific – sacrificial role of the Church and emphasize the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, as the only mediation which unites believers to Christ.

Pope Boniface's bull *Unam sanctam* in 1302 reflected the challenge to define the Church's participation in and mediation of the spiritual and the temporal realities. Since the Church mediates the spiritual power into the temporal world, participation in the Church is necessary, for it alone can mediate salvation through uniting these two realms. Here the pope articulates the nature of the Church as mystical body, without which, no one may partake in the Body of Christ. He emphasizes also the hierarchical structure of this body and demands that participation in Christ also requires submission to the pope.

Finally, about one hundred fifty years after the Bull of Innocent, the Council of Florence in 1442 aimed to restore unity with the Eastern churches. By this point the axiom was anything but new; in fact, the statement issued by this council clearly echoes that of earlier popes. This council emphasized that since Christ is the final revelation of God, and the Church is entrusted with his mission, there can be no unification with Christ where there is separation from the Church, the only bearer of his mission.

[The Holy Roman church] firmly believes, professes, and teaches that none of those who exist outside of the Catholic Church ... can become sharers of eternal life; rather, they will go into the eternal fire which was prepared for the devil and

his angels unless, before the end of their lives, they are joined to that same church...³²

It is noteworthy that the statement mentions not only schismatics (as in earlier texts where unity is sought), but also Jews and pagans. The Council clearly stresses the necessity of the sacraments, the acts of piety and exercising a “militant” Christian life, fasting and almsgiving all within the “bosom of the Catholic Church.”³³

By this point, the Church has begun facing more challenges not only to its unity by a long series of schisms and heresies, but also challenges to its power from other religions, particularly Judaism and Islam. Islam had been threatening the Catholic domination of the academic institutions and philosophical sciences as well as the developing natural sciences, and Jews were gaining strength as Europe became more urbanized. Where these other religions had not been the main focus of the axiom in the earlier periods, they enter into the discussion by this time.

Documents from the Middle Ages reflect sociological discrimination based on religion, particularly the threat Christianity faced by the growth of Islam and Judaism.³⁴ Again in this period we can see the motive for the Christian Church to proclaim that it alone contains the one and only path to salvation.

The Influence of the Modern Age on Interreligious Relationships

By the nineteenth century, the Church encountered the utmost challenges to its powerful claim that salvation could be not granted outside the one, sacramental holy

³² Sullivan, *Salvation Outside*, 6. See also Council of Florence, *Decree for Jacobites*, (22 November 1439), Session 8, EWTN Library Archives, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/councils/florence.htm> (accessed 25 June, 2013).

³³ Dupuis, *Toward*, 95-6. See also Neuner and Dupuis, *Doctrinal Documents*, 1005.

³⁴ Neuner and Dupuis, *Doctrinal Documents*, 377-8.

Roman Catholic Church. Following the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the Church by the modern age had to re-articulate its position in the world if it wanted to remain meaningful in the modern conversation about God's presence in the human experience.

Against nineteenth century liberalism and religious indifference, according to Dupuis,

[Ecclesial documents] contain harsh statements, much influenced by the current theology; at the same time they keep an element of permanent value. For, they witness to the Church's awareness of an objective order of salvation to which the human being is called to submit, and to a consciousness of the fact that the salvific grace of God comes to all people through Christ. Therefore, the Church, because of her unique relation to Christ, cannot be reduced to the level of other religious communities; her function is unique.³⁵

The twentieth century saw an even more pronounced shift in the Church's expression of the axiom, as it sought to preserve the necessity of the Church without appearing to monopolize grace or salvation. The task here was to demonstrate the Church's role in mediating God's presence in the world in a way that did not seem to repeat the condemnatory tone of previous centuries. The axiom was reiterated, however more muted, and in different contexts.

Mystici corporis, issued in 1943 by Pope Pius XII, reaffirmed the position that the fullness of revelation comes through participation in the mystical body of Christ, which belongs only to baptized members of the Roman Catholic Church. One noteworthy change in tone is found in its prayer and plea for those outside the Church to join the

³⁵ Neuner and Dupuis, *Doctrinal Documents*, 378.

communion of the Church. Most notable is that the old axiom has given way to the statement that those outside the Church are not assured of their salvation as long as they remain outside the Church; it does not deny the possibility of salvation, however.

We urge each and every one of them to be prompt to follow the interior movements of grace and to seek earnestly to rescue themselves from a state in which they cannot be sure of their own salvation. For even though, by a certain unconscious desire and wish, they may be related to the mystical body of the redeemer, they remain deprived of so many and so may powerful gifts and helps from Heaven, which can only be enjoyed within the Catholic Church.³⁶

The language indicates that there is a relationship by unconscious desire or wish, a marked difference from the outright exclusion unless one explicitly states his or her intention to come into the communion through baptism. This suggests a possibility, though not an assurance, that God would save those who, even culpably, remain outside the Catholic Church.³⁷

Before moving on to the documents of Vatican II and the second half of the twentieth century, we should note that in spite of the damning language woven throughout the history of Catholic statements on non-Christians, there are also woven in tolerant and positive statements. Dupuis offers several examples from the Middle Ages that demonstrate the good will of the Church toward other religions. For example, he refers to a letter by Pope Gregory VII written in 1075 to Muslim King Anzir of Mauritania, which acknowledges the goodness of the faith and his desire in the others'

³⁶ Pius XII, *Mystici corporis* [Encyclical Letter On the Mystical Body of Christ], 29 June, 1943, sec. 103, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi_en.html (accessed 26 June, 2013).

³⁷ Sullivan, *Salvation Outside*, 132-3.

salvation and God's providence.³⁸ Others, such as Nicholas of Cusa and Peter Abelard in the thirteenth century, focus on the transcendence of God and common pursuit of the Absolute good. In the *Dialogues*, Abelard's discourse between a Christian and a Jew point out that, in spite of their differences, both share a common pursuit of the same supreme good. Perhaps most notable is not only the attitude of St. Francis of Assisi toward the Muslims and his friendship with them, but the fact that the relationship with "Muslim brothers" was built into the rule of the Franciscan Order.³⁹ Many statements indicate that God, not the Catholic Church, is the ultimate authority on who is saved and who is not. Moreover, we have noticed that throughout the history, hope that God's revelation to those outside communion with the Catholic Church might offer them some means toward unity with the Church. Most all the authors highlighted have mentioned the necessity to be in communion with the Catholic Church since the commission of Christ is to spread the good news.

By the twentieth century, we note a turn in the language which suggests that people may be related to Christianity by unconscious desire, quite a dramatic shift in the stance of the Council of Florence (and later Trent and Vatican I) which not only insisted that salvation is only through the Catholic Church, but also in submission to the pope. These positions may seem contradictory, and their differences are important to theology of religions and for a theology of pluralism. Contemporary theology, such as that of Dupuis, builds a position of relative inclusivism juxtaposed with that of the exclusivity of theology of earlier periods.

³⁸ Dupuis, *Toward*, 102. Reference to Pope Gregory VII's letter is also found in *Nostra aetate* 5.

³⁹ Dupuis, *Toward*, 102-4.

What to make of these inconsistencies? Scholars have asked if these post-conciliar statements intend to mark an abrupt shift in Catholic thinking, or if they have developed more gradually. To answer this, we must evaluate the statements in light of their historical placements, and the contexts of the Church in the world at these different moments. Francis Sullivan summarizes how *Mysterium ecclesiae* understands different expressions of doctrine:

It recognizes that a dogmatic truth that had previously been expressed in a less perfect way can, when subsequently considered in a broader context of faith or human knowledge, receive a more perfect expression. Now it seems obvious that the subsequent 'more perfect expression' is going to reflect a better understanding of the truth; and it is also noteworthy that the Church's better understanding of its faith can also be gained through a broader context of human knowledge.⁴⁰

Vatican II and Beyond: Toward an Ecclesiology of Relationship with Other Faiths

Around the middle of the twentieth century, both in papal statements as well as the documents of Vatican II, we see evidence of the Church's new attitude. The Church first seems to acknowledge the freedom of God to act in whichever way God chooses, and also acknowledges the value in the free response of the human hearer in coming to know God, even if this occurs outside the confines of the Catholic Church or sacraments. Indeed, it acknowledges that God's revelation is God's own to give, and this revelation offers its recipient participation in divine life.

In *Ecclesiam suam*, Pope Paul VI, in 1964, offers dramatic change in the level of respect for those who believe in God through traditions outside the Catholic faith. Far from the days when Irenaeus taught that even martyrdom would not save a person who remained outside ecclesial communion, we see genuine appreciation for the other

⁴⁰ Sullivan, *Salvation Outside*, 11.

traditions.

We do...acknowledge with respect the spiritual and moral values of ...non-Christian religions for we desire to join them in promoting and defending common ideals in the spheres of religious liberty, human kinship, teaching and education, social welfare and civil order.⁴¹

In *Gaudium et spes* as well, we note the marked change in esteem for those in other religions:

All this holds true not only for Christians but also for all individuals of good will in whose hearts grace is active invisibly [cf. n. 1018]. For since Christ died for all [cf. Rom 8:32], and since all human beings are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being associated, in a way known to God, with the paschal mystery.⁴²

These statements maintain the necessity of some relationship to Christ and the Church, but also recognize the common end to all human existence, which all may find in their personal experiences and through their own religious traditions. These statements validate the pursuit of God through other religious practices insofar as they involve the activity of the Holy Spirit.

Nostra aetate more explicitly communicates this marked shift in attitude by the Catholic Church in its relationship to non-Christian religions. Clearly that the document has a place in the Vatican II statements is itself revealing of the Church's desire to express its belief and its relationship with other religions, and indeed its own role in mediating salvation for the world.

⁴¹ Sullivan, *Salvation Outside*, 11. See also Paul VI, *Ecclesiam suam*, 108.

⁴² Sullivan, *Salvation Outside*, 11. See also Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et spes* [Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World] (December 7, 1965), 22, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html (accessed 26 June, 2013).

Nostra aetate mediates between earlier theologies that merely suggest tolerance for other religions and later theologies that broaden into inter-religious theologies. It initiates a primitive theology of pluralism, inasmuch as it lays out the theology of the common origin and destiny shared by people of all faiths. It expresses that there are seeds of truth and goodness that orient the other religions to the same truth. It maintains the traditional expression that the Church in Christ is the fullness of religious life, but yet acknowledges the reflection of the “ray of Truth which enlightens all people.”⁴³ Finally, it expresses the need for prudent and loving dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other faiths, not only as a testimony to the Christian faith, but also as a gesture of respect for the spiritual goods and the cultural values of the others.⁴⁴ All of these positive statements carve out a renewed opportunity for dialogue and appear to approve of the pursuit of a more inclusive theology of religions.

The theology of the Holy Spirit also began to figure more substantially into the discussion in the latter half of the century, bolstering the developing field of pluralistic and inclusive theologies. Pope John Paul II in *Redemptor hominis* affirmed the truth revealed in these religions by the Spirit. He made enormous theological progress by endorsing the activities that foster improved relationships, such as “dialogue, contacts, prayer in common, investigation of the treasures of human spirituality,” and in

⁴³ Vatican Council II, *Nostra aetate* [Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions] (28 October, 1965), 2, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html (accessed 26 June, 2013).

⁴⁴ Vatican Council II, *Nostra aetate*, 2.

recognizing our common spirituality.⁴⁵ In this encyclical, while he makes clear the necessary role of the Church and its mission, it is undeniable that John Paul II recognized and validated God's presence in non-Christian faiths.

In 1984, just a few years after *Redemptor hominis*, the Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions provided more support for the deepened sense of unity among the different faith traditions. Following John Paul II, the Church continued to affirm the role of the Spirit in the shared human experience of searching for truth and in the activities that engage the hearts and consciences of all humans, which had great ecclesiological significance. The Church, whose mission originated from the Word itself, is in process toward its fulfillment. *Dialogue and Mission* by the Secretariat for Non-Christians expresses that the Church, however, is not the *only* path toward this, but shares this journey along with the rest of humanity:

The reign of God is the final end of all persons. The Church, which is to be 'its seed and beginning,'⁴⁶ is called from the first to start out on the path towards the kingdom and, along with the rest of humanity, to advance toward that goal... The Church is thus oriented towards God's reign and its fulfillment in the perfect communion of all humankind as brothers and sisters in God.⁴⁷

Since then, theology has sought to understand the salvific action of God through the

⁴⁵ John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis* [Encyclical Letter On the Beginning of his Papal Ministry] (4 March 1979), 6, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis_en.html (accessed 26 June, 2013).

⁴⁶ Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium* [Dogmatic Constitution on the Church] (21 Nov., 1964), 5 and 9, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html (accessed 26 June, 2013).

⁴⁷ Secretariat for Non-Christians, *Dialogue and Mission* [The Attitude of the Church Toward Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission] (10 May, 1984), 25, <http://www.cimer.org.au/documents/DialogueandMission1984.pdf> (accessed 26 June, 2013). See also Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium* 5, 9, and 48.

Trinity: Does God save through the Truth given through the revelation of the Holy Spirit, regardless of one's belief in Christ, or is that sufficient for salvation? Must a person explicitly proclaim faith in the Gospel and in Christian baptism, and thus in the truths promulgated in the Catholic Church? What salvific truths might be found in the other faith traditions, and is there a way to find a theology that acknowledges these truths as sufficient?

The situation of the Church in the twentieth century is characterized by new self-awareness, followed by a natural revitalization in its identification with other faiths. The theology that developed out of the ecclesiology of Vatican II has called for a re-evaluation of the origins of our teachings on non-Christian traditions and re-articulation of theological expressions that have emerged over two millennia. We have seen how theology has developed to consider the work of God outside the boundaries of the Christian Church, but the language of theology is bound to earlier formulations that paralyze, to some extent, an ecclesiology of relationship and inclusivism. In the following sections, we will see how Dupuis' method frees theology and establishes a vision of Church that eliminates the paradoxes set up in earlier formulations. His is an ecclesiology that is inclusive and pluralistic, and primarily Christian.

Part Three: Dupuis' Theology of Inclusive Pluralism

Building a Theology of Inclusive Pluralism

Dupuis made it clear that his theology of inclusive pluralism is one contribution among others in the expansion of the theology of religions since Vatican II. As already noted, the question about the status of believers in other religions in light of Christian revelation is not a new problem. However, theologians have been working out the

apparent contradictions in the history of the Church's statements. There are several reasons this discussion takes on new significance and direction today, all of which contribute to the ongoing development of theology of religions as we look toward the future of the Church in the world. Dupuis' contributions have global, ecclesiological, pastoral, and theological significance.

Dupuis sought first and foremost to construct a theology that is inclusive of people in all religious traditions within the Christian paradigm of revelation and salvation. Clearly the Church and countless Catholic theologians share faith in the transcendence and freedom of God, and agree that God freely reveals and saves according to God's own will. When salvation is believed to be possible only through ecclesial communion, the problem becomes an ecclesiological one: what exactly is the role and mission of the Catholic Church, if there is indeed the chance that God reveals God's self outside of the Church, and may even offer salvation apart from the sacramental communion?

Dupuis recognized that the traditional framework provides no clear resolution to the paradox of the universal Logos and particular Christ-event. Because this paradox lies at the heart of Christology and is the very foundation of Christian belief, the most obvious answer to the problem of pluralism excludes people of other religions from salvation. Any other answer would ostensibly diminish the necessity of the Church. What Dupuis suggests instead is a new paradigm. While historical theological interpretations have proven to create formulations which have limited the Church in its own universal mission, Dupuis found that the way to following Christ is to reconcile his person and work, and therefore the work of the Church, as *both* particular and universal.

Oneness and universality: We must find a way of combining both and holding them together... Without universality, uniqueness is exclusivism. Without uniqueness, universality would lead us down the pluralist path. In combination, however, the notes of uniqueness and universality accord with...inclusive Christology.⁴⁸

Dupuis suggests that we need to revise the language of theology and make certain revisions that will better define ecclesiology where the Church does not limit the salvific activity of Christ:

- The need for an inductive rather than deductive methodology
- The need for a paradigm shift
- The need for a revised Christology
- The need to overcome the dualism of particular and universal
- The need for different language
- The need to relook at salvation history and God's covenant

A New Methodology

In order to make sense of the multiplicity of religions which all have God as their origin, their destiny, and the object of their search for truth, Dupuis offers an inductive rather than deductive approach. He suggests that theology begins with knowing God in one's particular situation and seeking a solution to one's existential search through Christian revelation and theological reflection. Constructing a theology of religions, then, begins with sincere dialogue and respect for the religious experience of the other. This demands an answer from Christianity about the sharing of God's revelation and a "sincere reinterpretation of the revealed datum."⁴⁹ This process begins from a person's or community's context and the hermeneutic of experience to interpret revelation within

⁴⁸Jacques Dupuis, *Jesus Christ at the Encounter of World Religions* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991), 192.

⁴⁹ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 8.

the Church community and with the help of the Gospel. Beginning with the historical, economic, social, and political contexts lends the content to Christian existence. This process frees theology to become a back-and-forth process between the Christian life and the revelation and tradition that interprets its meaning, what Dupuis calls the “hermeneutic circle,” which is the “ongoing movement between ‘context’ and ‘text’, between present and past.” He expands this by introducing a third element, the interpreter, making it a “hermeneutical triangle,” which calls for an interaction between “Christian memory, the surrounding cultural reality, and the Church.”⁵⁰

When applied to the theology of religions, then, using a hermeneutical interreligious theology broadens the horizon for theological discourse and expands theological praxis to all human beings, regardless of religious affiliation.

It ought to lead to a deeper discovery of the cosmic dimensions of the mystery of God and God’s design for all humankind. The aim is to do theology not for a billion Catholics in the world, or even for a billion and a half Christians, but for the six billion human beings who share the same ‘global village’ on our planet.⁵¹

This “broadening” of the theological horizon naturally emerges when God’s participation in history and the human community is thought of in its true context – the history of creation, not merely the history of the Christian Church. Dupuis’ method begins with the idea that the divine-human relationship includes *all* revelation as a hermeneutic for the Christian message.

A New Paradigm

⁵⁰ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 10.

⁵¹ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 11.

Dupuis' method seeks to centralize the Reign of God as a universally experienced event, but without dismissing the centrality and necessity of the Christ-event in history as the origin of the Christian faith. Rather, he reminds us that the Christian call to build God's kingdom on Earth was always meant as a universal mandate. The paradigm shift offers a critical interpretation of the Christian faith so it does not reduce Christ's universal presence to a privilege exclusive to Christians. Is there any way, then, to understand the role of Christ and the universal Catholic Church in ways that allow them to work as part of God's saving plan apart from an intransigent exclusivism?

Dupuis re-figures the traditional Christological and ecclesiological formulations so that the first task of Christianity is based on building God's reign, and he leaves no ambiguity about the relationship between the universal and particular Christ and the purpose of the revelatory activity of God in history. Dupuis' paradigm requires a shift from the Christocentric and ecclesiocentric Christian theology of the past. An inductive theology instead places the Reign of God at the center of the theology, and is therefore theocentric from the start.

Critics of Dupuis' theology question his recentralization of the Church and Jesus. Dupuis demonstrates the necessity of a theocentric model, however, wherein both the Church and the historical Jesus remain fundamental. Furthermore, the theocentric model allows for the freedom of God to act as God wills, rather than according to the limits of Christian doctrine. In other words, the idea that people may be saved in a way known only to God is made less obscure in a model that places at its heart God's free activity and the free response of each person.

It is simply a matter of acknowledging that God's self-manifestation has taken different forms in the different religious traditions, without having to prioritize the manifestation in Jesus Christ as in any way 'normative.' Or, rather, while acknowledging that it is no longer tenable to regard universal salvation as dependent on the person and work of Jesus Christ – as the Christocentric paradigm would have it – are we to continue to prioritize Jesus Christ in some way as the most perfect symbol, or even as the ideal model, and in this sense as 'normative' in the order of divine-human relationships for salvation.⁵²

In order to construct a theology that is both inclusive and Christian, Dupuis begins with a double paradigm shift, from ecclesiocentrism to Christocentrism to theocentrism.

The first shift from ecclesiocentrism to Christocentrism does not indicate a “decentering” of the Church, but rather a recentralization on the mystery of Jesus Christ. Not only does this recentering prevent the tendency toward the axiom “no salvation outside the Church,” but it also clearly distinguishes the role of Christ in the mystery of salvation from that of the Church.⁵³ It means that salvation does not necessarily depend on both the explicitly stated faith in Jesus Christ *only* as he is mediated through the Catholic Church. Decentering the Church makes Christ accessible outside the boundaries of the Catholic Church.

The second shift from Christocentrism to theocentrism puts God alone at the center of the theology. This would give every religion equal access to God, but then the question remains, “What does this mean for Christianity, which claims that the one and only mediator of God is the historical person of Jesus Christ?” Dupuis argues that this would require a Christian theology in which Christ is not constitutive for salvation,

⁵² Dupuis, *Toward*, 183-4.

⁵³ Dupuis, *Toward*, 186.

though he is normative, as the “most perfect symbol and even ideal model of human-divine relations.”⁵⁴

Dupuis refers to J.P. Schineller’s classifications as a basis for his analysis of the different ways Christ is understood in the economy of salvation. He acknowledges that while Schineller’s work is “incomplete,” it does clarify the various nuances in the positions of the pluralist vs. inclusivist Christologies. Further, it clarifies the need for redefinition and clarification of terms traditionally used to define Christ’s role in salvation, for Christ’s significance may be interpreted differently in ecclesiocentric models, Christocentric models, or theocentric models. For example, the constitutiveness and normativity of Christ can be interpreted with greater or lesser degrees of “radicality” according to the way one classifies Christ in the economy of salvation. Dupuis uses Schineller’s classification system to distinguish his position and his terminology from other inclusivists and pluralists.

It is important to note that Dupuis departs from many pluralists in his treatment of the centrality and necessity of Christ, however. According to some theologies, for example, Jesus Christ is constitutive but not normative, and in others he is neither constitutive nor normative. The constitutiveness or normativity of Christ in a particular theology varies according to one’s model of salvation. For example, Dupuis distinguishes his own Christology from that of John Hick in the way Christ is situated in his theocentric model. Dupuis believes Hick’s method allows only for a theocentric pluralism which does not privilege the universal role of Jesus Christ, but rather places

⁵⁴ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 78.

Christ as one “phenomenon” among many others, and which rejects any sort of inclusive Christologies put forth by other theologians.⁵⁵

The Need for a Revised Christology

For Dupuis, the theocentric paradigm does not devalue or relativize faith in Christ, but rather restructures it in such a way that universal salvation is understood as truly universal and inclusive. He says that proponents of the theocentric pluralism “have no intention of undermining the faith–commitment of Christians...At stake, however, is the universal significance and constitutive role which Christianity attributes to it.”⁵⁶

He lists seven basic reasons for the need to revisit the Christological question within a theocentric paradigm:

1. A newly acquired historical consciousness;
2. The inseparability in every human experience between content and context;
3. The relativity of every experience of the Divine Mystery which itself remains beyond all telling and is inexhaustible;
4. The particularity and contingency of the historical event Jesus of Nazareth;
5. The “theocentric” outlook of Jesus himself as against the Christocentric approach of the Apostolic Church;
6. The total discontinuity between Jesus’ own self-understanding and the kerygmatic proclamation of him;
7. The “mythical” or “metaphorical” language of the late New Testament Christology and its sequels in postbiblical tradition.⁵⁷

Dupuis makes it clear that he does not seek a departure from the foundation of the faith.

He instead reconsiders the meaning of participating in God’s plan of salvation, beginning

⁵⁵ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 79.

⁵⁶ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 190.

⁵⁷ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 190.

with Christ's *own* vision of this. He notes the evolution of this vision through its development through the apostolic interpretations and, later, the more permanent definition it acquired through the ecclesiastical structures of the Church.

Dupuis recognized the historical and contextual conditioning of this theology. He therefore asks the questions in the context of the twenty-first century, addressing concerns not raised by earlier periods in Christian history, in a world where the interaction among the religions demands new consideration of God's plan of salvation, and the role of Christ and the Church.

Because his theology demands recognition of the limitations and the conditioned nature of theological formulations, Dupuis insists that Christianity must be cautious when making claims about absoluteness when these claims are historically and culturally conditioned. Furthermore, classic language has acquired different interpretations over time, and particular words associated with Jesus, such as "uniqueness," are not univocal. Theology that seeks to understand God's plan in history must necessarily take history into account. Therefore, the way we understand the world will -- and should -- inform our encounter with the divine. According to Dupuis, Christian theology must consider not only the text of revelation and the doctrines of history that have interpreted these encounters, but also the diversity of contexts in which they continue to be made meaningful. "There follows a 'deabsolutizing' and 'deobjectifying' of truth, truth always being dependent on the knower's preconceptions and subject to change."⁵⁸ Even Jesus' self-consciousness was relative, he says, so therefore our own notions of the divine mystery as we understand it through him are necessarily relative as well. This relativity

⁵⁸ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 283.

implies the universality of Christ's revelation and the mission of the Church. It means that the mission may always proceed towards its fulfillment in a meaningful way for every time and people along its way. It means that the Kingdom of God is always something authentically built among its inhabitants who seek it in solidarity.

His theology challenges traditional formulations insofar as it demands the acknowledgement of the possibility of a broader expression of God's presence in human lives than what Christianity has established through its own interpretations and doctrines. Further, he challenges the contemporary world, and moreover, the Church, to consider new interpretations of the divine-human encounter and refreshed theological expressions that are more consistent with that of Jesus himself in his role in God's plan.

This method considers human experience in historical context as interpretive of the "text" of revelation. Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom was indisputably theocentric; his role was instrumental in a plan already set forth. In the apostolic interpretation of the early Church, however, Jesus' particularity became the center. The Church was structured in order to communicate and unite people into the participation of the Kingdom, as proclaimed by the historical Jesus, and later the generations of Christian witnesses. Dupuis shows that participation in building God's Kingdom is a dynamic process that always involves an interplay between the human context and this world of creation. Therefore, we need not retain our strict position on these historical developments, but allow our theology to be shaped by revelation itself, and let it be adapted to the ongoing human response to revelation.

The Need to Overcome the Dualism of Particular and Universal

The central problem for Christians regarding the salvation of non-Christians is

finding inclusive theological language that does not conflict with the Christian confession in Jesus as the one, unique, definitive revealer and savior, without faith in whom there is no possibility of salvation. Obviously, the belief in the historical event of Jesus Christ was necessary for the formation of the apostolic mission of the Church. This has been the foundation for our Christian belief and the core of unity among the Christian community.

And yet Dupuis notes that this emphasis on the historical event of Jesus Christ was by no means insignificant, but that our theology should be developed upon Christ's universality. The emphasis on the low Christology of the early fathers in some ways conflicts with the higher Christology that provides a more universal theology of salvation. Dupuis offers an alternative that establishes a less ambiguous stance on the meaning of Christ's work in the world.

Like other inclusivists, Dupuis agrees on the emphasis of the Logos theology that allows for Christ's activity outside the few years in which Jesus lived. He maintains that an inclusivist position is the only one that can consistently hold together both of the Christian tenets that Jesus Christ is the one decisive revelation and constitutive savior and also that God is believed to have been revealed throughout history, apart from the single historical event of Jesus. He argues that the dilemma of the either-or positions between exclusivism and pluralism (such as the problem offered by Hick) cannot be universal, insofar as this problem rests on the presumption of a divinity which corresponds to the monotheistic religious traditions.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 192. See also Gavin D'Costa, *Theology and Religious Pluralism: The Challenge of Other Religions* (Birmingham: Blackwell, 1986), 136.

While inclusivist, then, it is also pluralist in its treatment of the centrality and definition of the historical Jesus. By placing an emphasis instead on Christ, second person of the Trinity, and in the omnipresent activity of the Holy Spirit, it removes the absolute requirement of all people in every time and place in history to abide by a historical event that placed no immediate demand on their religious beliefs until ecclesiastical Christianity began to demand it. But does this render the particularity of Jesus irrelevant or ineffective in their lives, or in God's plan for their salvation?

By maintaining the two axioms in fruitful tension, the inclusivist paradigm can be characterized by an openness and commitment: an openness that seeks to explore the many and various ways in which God has spoken to all his [*sic*] children in the non-Christian religions and an openness that will lead to the positive fruits of this exploration transforming, enriching, and fulfilling Christianity, so much so that its future shape may be very different from the Church we know today.⁶⁰

Dupuis' inclusivism insists that this paradigm allows for the decisive revelation of God and the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ, who is at once historical and particular, but at the same time universally present to all and through all religious traditions. Dupuis asserts that there can be no other way to reconcile the Church's belief in the particularity and universality of Christ.

Revelation and Salvation as Universal and Particular

In order to define Christian revelation as both universal and particular for the development of an inclusive theology, Dupuis begins with two main questions:

1. "How are we to understand that Jesus Christ is the 'fullness' of divine revelation if it is true that God revealed himself through prophetic figures in various other religious traditions, both before and after him? Do the

⁶⁰ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 193. See also Gavin D'Costa, *Theology and Religious Pluralism*, 136.

‘sacred books’ or ‘oral traditions’ of other religions offer but a human discourse about God or the Absolute; or do they, on the contrary, contain a ‘word spoken by God’ to the people of those religions and even to all humankind?”

2. “If...Jesus Christ represents the ‘fullness’ of divine revelation has revelation come to a complete end with him? Or, on the contrary, can divine revelation in any way be conceived as an ‘ongoing process,’ both inside and outside Christianity?”⁶¹

These questions illustrate the complicated nature of Christian revelation as, again, paradoxically universal but yet “complete” and “full” in the person of Jesus. Are we to understand this as the “last” revelation, or is it the “only” revelation that may be considered to be theologically relevant? Here Dupuis reminds us that the Word of God pre-existed the historical words of Jesus, and it is well-understood in the Bible that though there were many instances of divine revelation, there was but one and the same Word. Both Old and New Testaments provide ample evidence in the faith of one Lord communicating in various times and ways in human history.

Some key doctrines from the Christian Scripture and Tradition form the basis for Dupuis’ theology, but they must be understood in relationship to one another in order to fully comprehend God’s plan of salvation. While some ecclesial documents address these in rather fragmentary ways, Dupuis seeks to synthesize the doctrines to illustrate the universal nature of revelation:

- that it is Trinitarian;
- that God is understood as both immanent and as transcendent;
- that the revelation through Christ is fully the revelation of God, but that we must consider it as relative and not absolute;
- that revelation is differentiated and complementary.

⁶¹ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 236.

Trinitarian

We have explored in some depth the significance of the pre-existent Word of God, the Logos who is eternally present and active in human history, though we must not dismiss the effect of the Trinity in the mystery of salvation. The solution to the apparent paradox of the eternal yet particular revelation of Christ becomes clearer when put in the perspective of Christ as second person of the Trinity. How does the Trinity, and not simply Jesus of Nazareth, work in revealing God within the framework of the plan of salvation?

Not only does the incarnate Logos intervene in human history to deepen knowledge of God, but the Holy Spirit is the figure who weaves together the mystery of revelation and salvation in every experience of human-divine encounter. We understand the Spirit as part of the economy of salvation history not only as part of human history, but who acts within the life of the Trinity and extends God into the lives and minds of individuals, their religions, and their cultures. The Spirit is undeniably active in the entirety of salvation history, present to all who search for and respond to God's invitation. The Christian faith has affirmed this universal action of the Spirit in the life of the world, where God is personally known. Therefore, we cannot deny that this is a truly universal mode of unity among all, regardless of religious affiliation, that the Spirit acts in all who seek God, for the God that is revealed in Christ Jesus is also revealed through the Spirit. All of humanity is unified by the experience of God prior to religious tradition. In this sense, God's relationship with us is already inclusive and pluralistic. We must therefore fashion our theology according to *God's* activity.

Inward and Outward

Dupuis appeals to the inner dimensions of revelation and faith as an experience of God's immanence. Dupuis would include prayer as one example. These experiences may not be formally religious but are available to all human beings, and practiced by many, even those who would not identify with a particular religion. He notes that Rahner's idea of the supernatural existential is an example of the theological underpinnings of such ideas and that all divine-human encounters are not necessarily a function of one's religious community. Christian history also tells us that *faith* is ultimately the act by which one is saved, not the extent of the comprehension of the revelation given. "After all, salvation depends on the response made by sinful human beings, in faith, to a personal communication initiated by God."⁶²

Dupuis notes that not all religions have an object of faith, but may instead be apophatic approaches to an unknown absolute. In contrast to the relational concept of God (or perhaps complementary to it), whereby one knows God through an idea of relationship or interactive response, some religions are instead contemplative and practiced where God is not an ecstatic experience or known as a relational being. Though these religions do not contemplate the special revelation of the Jewish and Christian traditions, they are nonetheless genuine religious experiences of the presence of the unknown Absolute. Even these events of "in-stasy," as opposed to ecstasy, are encounters with the one and same God that is revealed in Christ, though in a "hidden and secret" fashion. Though the concept of God through this is thus incomplete by Christian standards, it is no less a genuine experience in which God takes the initiative and awaits

⁶² Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 240.

the response of the individual in faith. Insofar as God is present and responded to, this is the work of the one and only Christ as the encounter of God.⁶³ This notion is far from alien to the Christian experience of God as one who is wholly other and yet wholly immanent. If this idea that God is known intrinsically and intimately through a Christian's own contemplation, then it would hold true for others who seek a genuine understanding and deepening of one's relationship as a response of the quest for the truth. The full understanding of this God, as Dupuis notes, is not altogether complete for a Christian even though Christians have had the idea made known explicitly through Christ. The seeker who does not know this as the full revelation might yet have a knowledge perhaps more keen, as revelation is granted in ways that are known only to God.

Full Revelation in Christ

Dupuis notes that the fullness of revelation exists through Jesus' own self-consciousness, and because of his unique and indispensable relationship within the Trinity, only he can contain the fullest revelation that can be known to the human mind. On that note, Dupuis holds that inasmuch as Jesus was fully human, revelation, as a matter of being understood through finite human consciousness, must be relative and not absolute. Even the self-consciousness of Jesus was executed with the limitations of the human being, and so the Divine Mystery is not completely revealed or exhausted even in this, though it can be considered the fullest manner in which human kind may have access.

Dupuis argues that while Jesus may have been understood through the

⁶³ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 241.

incarnational event to reveal God's plan to humans in the fullest way we can know, we cannot say that this is identical to knowing God fully. The particularity of Jesus' existence is thus *limited* revelation, because the human nature of Christ in some way limited Jesus' own self-consciousness.

The historical particularity of Jesus imposes upon the Christ-event irremediable limitations. This is necessarily part of the incarnational economy willed by God. Just as the human consciousness of Jesus as Son could not, by nature, exhaust the mystery of God, and therefore left his revelation of God incomplete, in like manner neither does or can the Christ-event exhaust God's saving power. God remains beyond the man Jesus as the ultimate source of both revelation and salvation.⁶⁴

At the same time, Dupuis recalls that not only has Jesus been the fullness of revelation, the help of the Holy Spirit continues to assist humanity and the Church in its constant search for Truth. We can never fully know the Divine Mystery, but we can be assured that it is at least relatively known by us, simply because we can only know such things relatively.⁶⁵

This leads to the question about the role of revelation in other traditions. While revelation through the particular person of Jesus of Nazareth may be understood by Christians as the fullest possible way that God's revelation may be grasped, how do we understand the other ways that God has been known?

Dupuis suggests a revision in the Christian tradition's absolute Christology, in light of the limitations of Jesus' particularity, the activity of the Trinity in the work of revelation and salvation, and Jesus' own self-consciousness in the mission of God's plan, as contrasted with that of the apostolic Church. First of all, Dupuis states that

⁶⁴ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 298.

⁶⁵ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 250.

absoluteness should only be applied to talk of God and God's unlimited activity in the world. When it is applied to the particularity of Jesus of Nazareth or of Christianity, or of any religion, it limits God to some category that is created, interpreted, and applied by human beings, which is automatically limited and conditioned. Instead, Christology may be viewed inductively, where the revelation through Christ is first a matter of praxis – where the response to Christ's revelation guides our knowledge of God's presence. Christology must also always be grounded in the Christology of Jesus himself, that is, in his own understanding of the saving work of God through him. But we recognize this very particularity of the person of Jesus as representative, the very sacrament of God's saving action, of an act of God's revelation and love beyond this person in his limited state. Therefore, any notion of Jesus as revealer and savior must at once include the activity of the eternal Logos, and therefore an encounter with the divine that does not rest only in the particularity of the person of Jesus.

While the human action of the Logos *ensarkos* is the universal sacrament of God's saving action, it does not exhaust the action of the Logos. A distinct action of the Logos *asarkos* endures – not...as constituting a distinct economy of salvation, parallel to that realized in the flesh of Christ, but as the expression of God's superabundant graciousness and absolute freedom... The particularity of the event, however, leaves room for holding together, within the one divine plan, the universal significance of JC and the saving value of other traditions.⁶⁶

Thus, we have an expanded notion of revelation and salvation, but one that is most certainly and decisively revealed through the person of Jesus. This not only maintains the necessity of Christ, but it also frees God to be the ultimate and absolute revealer and

⁶⁶ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 298-9.

savior that need not be limited to one moment in human history, at the risk of excluding all those outside that particular event.

Differentiated and Complementary

Dupuis acknowledges that Jesus Christ had the decisive word for the apostolic community and that word is contained in the scriptures. Even so, he argues, there is no need to believe that this word does not support the other revelations contained in other communities which have received them in faith. Just as we understand God to have spoken to the Old Testament witnesses, we can understand how God is also revealed to other nations and communities. The message contained in the person of Jesus propagated by the Christian community, in fact, does not contradict that revelation received in other communities as well.

Dupuis names three stages in the history of revelation. First, there is the cosmic stage, in which God is heard and known by those outside the Judeo-Christian history. In these traditions, traces of revelation are contained in their own sacred scriptures. Next is the stage of Israel, in which God is made known through the prophets. Both are ordered to the ultimate revelation that occurs in Jesus Christ, where God makes God's Word decisively known through Jesus and this is the Word that is witnessed by the New Testament era. Dupuis understands that all of these revelations have certain titles, such as "sacred scriptures," "word of God," and "inspiration." These represent the different stages and activity of divine revelation to different hearers in different phases in salvation history. And while special significance must be given to the message given through Jewish and Christian revelation, all must be considered valid and valuable, even when they only point to less "complete" revelations of the same God. In each of these stages,

the Holy Spirit is always the guiding presence that leads humanity into the direction it is given by God in the Divine plan. The Holy Spirit, in laying out the seeds of the Word for all, is orienting all to the one and same God who is revealed through the very plan to which all followers of these revealed words are responding. The action of the Holy Spirit is universal, and it is unifying. Though revelation is differentiated and takes place and shape in every context and religion, it is more aptly described as unified, insofar as all humanity is one in its response to the same revealer of the same Truth. The message is the same, though the hearers are diverse. All revealed truth points to the one and same Truth. Since Christ, the fullness of revelation, is normative, then truth can be distinguished from non-truth when these contradict the fullness of the Word of God. In other words, this theology of revelation leaves room for complementarity of God's word, even though the different scriptures may highlight different aspects of this. Dupuis notes that this "open theology" which acknowledges the different elements of divine truth as revealed in other scriptures, need not compromise Christian identity, however. In fact, such a theological framework can only help illumine one's own faith, showing the convergence among different ways that revelation has informed traditions and cultures, and serve to engage believers in the historical nature of the process of revelation and response as it plays out in cultures and individual spiritual lives. In other words, since all revelation points to the one Truth, we may understand the divine plan even more fully through the multiform responses to it.⁶⁷

Need for Revised Language

⁶⁷ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 252. See also Keith Ward, *Religion and Revelation: A Theology of Revelation in the World's Religions* (New York: Oxford, 1994), 310-317.

Dupuis suggests that if a theology of pluralism calls for a renewed paradigm, it likewise calls for reconsiderations of this language. One of the most common difficulties in constructing a theology of pluralism lies in the fact that usual terms to describe Christ are not univocal, and so they may lead to misunderstandings and sometimes disagreement. Words like centrality, normativity, universality, absoluteness, and uniqueness are all open to multiple interpretations.⁶⁸ These ambiguities can be used to either extreme: to relativize Christ's importance in God's plan, or to set up a rigid exclusivism. Dupuis seeks a definition of Christ that is neither reductionist nor intransigent. These words can also take different meaning according to the theological framework. For example, the word "normative" for Jesus may be understood differently in a Christocentric model compared to a theocentric paradigm.

The Need to Relook at Salvation History and God's Covenant

Possibly at the heart of the challenge to Christian theology in a multireligious world is the issue of salvation. Dupuis finds that the answer lies in the framing of salvation history. Dupuis asks these three questions:

- Is salvation history universal or particular?
- Is the economy of salvation Christic or Trinitarian (or does it have to be one or the other)?
- Is God's covenant with human kind limited to the Hebrew-Christian story and history, or is there a cosmic and extrabiblical possibility?

Salvation history includes the close relationship between Jewish and Christian history, wherein, in fact, Christ is the fulfillment of the salvation history introduced in the prophetic history of the Jewish tradition. Since the history of the salvation of this people

⁶⁸ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 181.

originates and develops through the Jewish story, the Jewish people are included as a function of the Christian notion of salvation history.

Does salvation history include any people outside of this history? Does salvation history only include the Judeo-Christian story or is there some extrabiblical history that is also relevant for human salvation? If salvation is truly universal, and it is understood that Christ effected this for all, might we understand the economy of salvation as a process that might be worked out in other times and spaces? Is salvation history really universal or really particular, or, like the revelation of the Logos, is it both? Dupuis asks if “special” salvation history can extend beyond the boundaries of the Hebrew-Christian tradition, or if God really intended it to be contingent upon certain moments in human history.⁶⁹

Here we return to the question of the significance of Christ’s historical personhood. What is the role of the particular Jesus if the eternal Logos reveals and saves outside of a particularly small period of time? Though the Christ-event is the focal point in human history for Christians, it need not be precisely limited to that moment or even to the subsequent centuries of its particular interpretation. Instead, the particularity of Jesus really ought to be considered only in union with his universal presence in the world. Dupuis suggests a change in perspective in which Christ’s role and his particular presence on Earth should not restrict the faith to a moment in history, but should more importantly and authentically call upon the Christ who is present at all times, ever revealing, and always acting according to a universal divine plan of salvation. It should bring forth the abiding presence of the Word of God in history at *every* particular moment

⁶⁹ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 220.

of religious history. In fact, Jesus' very existence, though short, pointed not to that moment itself, but to every moment beyond it, and unifying it with prior ages. While it was a definitive moment for humanity, it was a moment that gave meaning to the entirety of salvation history. The living Christian faith is never meant to be limited to a mere memorial, but is an ever-forward movement under the new promise of God's enduring providence and assurance.

This progression has been associated largely in Christian theology and spirituality as participation with the Spirit, who ever-awakens individuals to the revelation that will bring them to knowledge and union with God. When one considers only Christ, one might be more inclined to reduce the Christian faith to one moment in time; but belief in the triune God requires belief that God transcends each moment but is present throughout every age. If this is so, we must find a way to tie the theology of the Spirit with the particularity of Jesus Christ. John Paul II wrote extensively on the activity of the Holy Spirit's activity in the religions, but theology must find a way to unite the salvific activity of the Spirit in conjunction with the saving action of Jesus. A theology of religious pluralism must insist on including the revelatory and salvific presence of the Holy Spirit in extrabiblical history.

While this has been clearly accepted in the documents of the Church, it continues to create a tenuous line for theologians. We must therefore re-evaluate the traditional Christological formulations.

1. Is a Christocentric perspective any longer tenable?
2. Are Christocentrism and theocentrism mutually opposed?

Dupuis suggests dropping the rigid distinction between the general and specialized

histories. Given the more comprehensive explanation of God's plan, it seems necessary to phrase our soteriology in more inclusive terms, to convey that salvation is a universally present promise.⁷⁰

Here we must consider the historical-mythical influences on Christian soteriology. Many religious traditions understand the working of God through their myths; the Judeo-Christian tradition identifies its uniqueness through its historical manifestations of God. These, however, must not be seen as being quite so distinct from one another, even for the Christian tradition. This tradition is made up of revelations of God that are made clear through both their historical events and their mythical interpretations. What ties these two modes of understanding God's relationship with humanity, the message at the heart of both modes of revelation, is that God is present throughout all of creation history. In other words, God's covenant is not restricted to the stories that describe it or the history that mediates it, but should be understood as a covenant over all creation in history and space: a cosmic covenant. This is to say that our understanding of God through our mythical tradition as well as the historical manifestations are bound up through one promise. This promise is communicated through the myths, which serve the important purpose of orienting all creation toward its end and unifying it its participation in it throughout the ages.

The cosmic covenant, the promise and abidance of God to help humankind toward its fulfillment, is the work of the Trinity. There is no separation of Christ and Spirit under a plan of salvation that incorporates all humankind at all points in history. Thus, any theology of pluralism must build upon the interpretation of both a Trinitarian

⁷⁰ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 233.

Christology and a Spirit Christology. This means that the historical particularity of Jesus cannot supersede the economy of the salvation. This model of convergence recalls the unity of the historical Jesus with his transcendent participation in the Trinity.

This solution avoids the problem between extreme pluralistic position (i.e., Hick), which offers a pluralism without unity or order, or an exclusivist paradigm which is tantamount to monolithic exclusivism. A convergent model, rather, evokes the foundational character of Christ even as the guarantee of God's manifold self-revelation, etc., through which the diverse paths tend toward a mutual convergence in the absolute divine mystery.

Summary of Christian Theology of Inclusive Pluralism

In its final form, Dupuis would say that this theology of pluralism must be based on the interaction of the Christian faith with other faiths, and in that sense it must be an interfaith theology, based on the confession of Christian faith and also open to all human experiences of the divine.⁷¹

Therefore, it is always rooted in the faith in the historical event of Jesus Christ decisively revealing God and the mystery of salvation to all humankind. It is inclusive of other religions and open to the experiences of God being revealed and accepted universally in every encounter with the divine, and recognizes that this takes shape in many different contexts. Since it begins with these experiences and not the traditional and paradoxical formulations of Christian theology, it frees God to reveal and save according to God's own plan, and also recognizes that the Christ-event in history does

⁷¹ Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 203-4.

not compete with a universal perspective, but also validates and corroborates the other manifestations of God in the world.

Part Four: Ecclesiology in a Theology of Inclusive Pluralism

The Necessity of the Church for a Christian Theology of Pluralism

When the Catholic Church is seen as benefiting its “members only,” i.e., through the sacraments that are only available to those officially initiated into of the Church, a theology of pluralism may seem impossible, or at least unnecessary. It may appear that the Church as sacrament would only be a sign and instrument of God’s presence to those who “belong” to it. But in Dupuis’ theology of pluralism, the Church functions in these ways:

- It serves as a sign and instrument of God’s presence in history, not only for Christian believers, but for all people in the world.
- It serves as the interpreter of the Christian witness that provides Christians a community to live their response in prayer and action.
- It provides a grounding for an encounter with those outside the faith, to engage in a mutual process of conversion to one another and to God.
- It serves as the universal and ongoing historical process of God making known to humanity that Christ came for all, in an event of love for all humankind.
- It provides the mode of active response for Christian witnesses who respond universally, in solidarity with all humankind, to the Spirit of Truth, to build the Reign of God.
- It serves as a unifying symbol of the final cause of this human pursuit of truth.

The Implications for Dupuis’ Ecclesiology

So what does Dupuis’ construction of an inclusive, pluralist Christian theology suggest for the meaning and direction of the Church? We must recall the basic foundation of his theological approach:

- It is inductive; that is, it begins from the human experience of God in all time and contexts.
- There is a threefold approach to this theological process, an interplay between text, context, and interpreter.
- It insists on the Christian faith as the ground for the theology, meaning that it has God at the center and the role of Christ and the Church as necessary in completing the meaning of the human relationship and encounter with the divine.
- It is directed by God's plan of salvation for humankind; therefore, the question of salvation is framed in the context of God's plan, as revealed and through Christ, as both the eternal Logos and particular human and through the activity of the Church.
- It encompasses all of salvation history and considers the Church and the other religions to share eschatological history.

Dupuis' model expresses the revelatory and salvific activity of God in the world through Christ somewhat differently from that of the apostolic community; therefore, we must understand the role of the Church as a theocentric process that acts according to Jesus' proclamation of the Reign of God in history over and above the Christocentric focus of the early Christian evangelists who wanted to reveal and bring people the news of Christ's message and into the developing community.

This paradigm departs slightly from the early apostolic ecclesiology but conforms more closely to the task that was revealed and inaugurated by Jesus Christ in his ministry. This mission does not depend only on converting someone to faith in Jesus, but beyond that, to participation in his work within a community that brings the Reign of God into

history through its proclamation, solidarity, and activity. What is prioritized is the value and action that Christ commanded, less the explicit membership in the Church.

Co-Members of the Reign of God

Dupuis' theocentric theology rests on the idea that the triune God has intended the salvation of all, has been revealed to all throughout history, cultures, personal experiences, and has done this in a Trinitarian manner. Can one participate in the Reign of God if not confessing faith in the Christian community, considering that the fullness of revelation was given decisively through the one and only Logos made incarnate?

A Kingdom-centered ecclesiology begins with the recognition that non-Christian religions do, in fact, open themselves to the activity of the Spirit. Co-participation in the world's events through common response to the indiscriminate call of the Holy Spirit provides the foundation for a Kingdom-centered theology.

In this framework, there is no need to conform other believers into the Christian faith by stretching the notion of salvation, redefining Christ, or reducing the definitive nature of Christ as mediator of salvation in order to include others into God's universal plan. By virtue of their response to the revealed word of Christ, they are already participating in it, whether they identify it as a response to the same revealer or not.

Like Karl Rahner and other inclusivists, Dupuis understands that any participation in religious expression in response to the call of the Holy Spirit, and the revelation of the one and only Logos invites participation in the one and same truth. Therefore, any participation in religion that seeks and participates in a divine-human encounter is already participation in the Kingdom of God. Christians and non-Christians are united in this,

whether they identify the differences among them as too significant or not, for religious symbols are constructed by and serve humankind, but true religious value transcends human categories. The freedom is God's to reveal and to unite; the divisions that have resulted from divisive human categories and exclusive claims to truth do not affect the effectiveness of God to unite all under God's own call by the Logos and guidance of the Spirit.

Though people of different faiths may not convert to any particular religion, the common conversion to God elicits response that, in Christian terms, is an assimilation of Gospel values in one's life. This common conversion to God transcends even the structures of Gospel and sacrament through authentic response to God's revelation. All hearers of the Word are united in action that is rooted in response, not only because it has been given as a commandment to some, but because it is a common goal of the building up of humanity and all of creation.

Building the Reign together extends, moreover, to the different dimensions of the Reign of God, which can be called horizontal and vertical, Christians and others build together the Reign of God each time they commit themselves of common accord in the cause of human rights, each time they work for the integral liberation of each and every human person, but especially of the poor and the oppressed. They also build the Reign of God by promoting religious and spiritual values. In the building of the Kingdom the two dimensions, human and religious, are inseparable.⁷²

The Church in a Kingdom-Centered Framework

It may seem that the belief in the necessity of the Catholic Sacraments would sublate a Christian theology of pluralism. Considering the division among

⁷² Dupuis, *Toward*, 346.

Christians over the theology of sacraments, it would seem insurmountable to accommodate non-Christians into the plan of salvation without their observance of, or even recognition of, the Catholic sacraments. It may seem from the description of a Kingdom-centered model offered by Dupuis that there is no need for the visible and active mediation of the Christian Church community or the participation in the sacramental life of the Catholic Church. We may ask what value there is in the Church or the sacraments in a paradigm that is fully inclusive and universal. Again, we face the dilemma of the universality and particularity not only of Christ, but of the Catholic Church.

Dupuis explores the following points in this matter:

- Is the Church as necessary as Jesus Christ?
- Is the necessity of the same order?
- Is the Church both a sign and means of salvation?
- Does it have to have a universal mediation and is it only from Jesus Christ's mediation?

The underlying question remains: is the Church necessary or even functional for anyone besides its members?

To start, Dupuis clarifies what “belonging” to the Church really means. First, Dupuis identifies two ways of belonging: explicit membership, such as all who have been baptized into the community of believers who share the common profession of faith; and implicit, meaning those who share the same calling and pursuit of the same truth, and who share in building the human community with those in the explicitly Christian Church.

Second, Dupuis clarifies “participation” by saying that all are incorporated into Christ through his incarnation and participation in the human-divine meeting in the

person of Jesus. We also say that when one is incorporated into Christ, one must therefore be oriented to the Church, for the Church's existence is only through Christ. If all are incorporated into Christ by virtue of Christ's incarnation, not necessarily by explicit confession, then everyone is oriented to the Church, because the Church exists also for them.

Whereas some inclusivists treat the idea of participation in the Church as a matter of desire without explicitly stating it or even knowing it, Vatican II carefully selects language of orientation rather than desire or wish. *Redemptoris missio* expands on this issue, emphasizing that it is by the power of grace, not necessarily the will of the individual, that one is included into the body of Christ and is thereby oriented to the Church:

For such people [those who don't have explicit faith in Jesus Christ and are not members of the Church] salvation in Christ is accessible in virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation.⁷³

The concern is the effect of the Church's service and mediation of grace if some are only oriented to it implicitly and mysteriously, and others are included explicitly.

Traditionally, we understand the Catholic Church to mediate God's presence in two ways: proclaiming the Word of God as communicated in the Gospels, and through the sacramental economy. Both are clearly directed at those explicitly involved in the Church.

How, then, is mediation of Christ possible through the Church outside of this?

⁷³ Dupuis, *Toward*, 349. See also John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, 10.

Dupuis defines mediation as a *final* and not an *efficient* cause. It therefore serves as a sign and instrument as the visible presence of God in history. The Church mediates grace ecclesially through the sacraments, yet it is also oriented to extra-ecclesial grace. In this sense, the Church is part of the process of universal grace and serves as the sign of grace for all people who seek it. It is a universal sign of the presence of God, and it is thus a necessary part of the economy of salvation. It is available to all; it serves by its visibility and presence to unite the world in effecting the presence of God as visible and active in the world. As a sign of grace, it is also a mediator of grace and human unity, as we all stand together in the presence of God, whether within or outside of the boundaries of the Church.

This is how Dupuis understands the Church as a sacrament of the Reign of God. Shifting the centrality of theology to God rather than the Church does not remove the necessity of the Church as a visible symbolic reality that mediates and signifies God's presence in the world, but rather makes it a more meaningful sign in its universal context. Rather than representing exclusive membership, the Church as the sign of God's presence in the world, as the visible community which has responded to God's call to action for the world makes the Church a necessary part of the universal plan of salvation. It is, in fact, a necessity in mediating God's presence both as a symbol but also in the identity and action of its community. This resembles the *communio* that solidified the original Christian community.

Furthermore, we see this not only as a sign of remembrance and participation in a reality that has passed, but in a process of history oriented to the eschaton. Therefore, theology must identify the Kingdom of God as a reality much larger than the Church,

with the Church as the instrument which brings the world into this phase. The Church is necessary not because one must participate in the sacraments, but *as* sacrament. The Church must not be thought to monopolize the Reign of God, but must be the beacon that draws people into unity of service to God through service to one another. The Church is therefore the means to participation in the eschatological reality insofar that it is in constant service to this Reign of God as it is built by the entire human community.

Only in a theocentric model, where people are converted to participation into the Kingdom of God rather than only ecclesial communion, can the Church function as the servant, the unifier, and the sign of presence in the world. Understood in this way, the Church may be viewed as the truly universal servant. A Kingdom-centered ecclesiology is truly inclusive, and as such, truly Christ-like. If one considers Jesus' own vision, life in belief in him within the community of believers involved response to his invitation to participate in the reality of the world in building the divine plan. This participation, in Jesus' own view, involved a simple response to do what he instructed through reverence to God and through the simple love for one another, and his repudiation of exclusion and evil in the world; these things that obstructed the unified response to God. If this is what Jesus commanded, and if this is why the Logos became human, then it seems to be that the Church itself ought to model itself on this form of inclusivity and unity toward common response to the good, than to upholding a standard of exclusion.

An Ecclesiology toward Convergence

An ecclesiological method of inclusive pluralism rooted in Christianity must:

- Find the meaning of relational uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ;

- Find mutual complementarity and convergence between Christianity and the other religious traditions.

Ecclesiology is inclusive in its vision when it encompasses all of salvation history, and regards the Church and the other religions as sharers in eschatological history. Because this ecclesiology begins with a Christology focused on Christ as the Alpha and the Omega, it is entirely Christian. Further, this ecclesiology provides language that makes sense of the particularity of Jesus and the eternal Logos, through its location of the historical event as an act of God in time that has meaning that transcends that particular place in human history. Therefore, the participation of Jesus as the revealer of God's plan is a universal mission at a certain point in history to unite all people under God's plan.

We must treat God's revelation in other religions as more than "seeds" of the truth contained only in Christianity, or which contain elements which may be assumed as beneficial in some way, even to Christians, but to consider every reality of divine interaction entirely valuable in itself. It is audacious for people to assume we understand the fullness of divine reality or of the divine plan. Therefore, Christian theology must consider the Christian faith as relative, not in the sense that the historical event of Jesus Christ is only relatively true, but in the sense that it is related to other religions that practice an authentic response to an authentic revelation of God in their own traditions and cultures.

An ecclesiology of pluralism is meant to stand on interfaith unity. This begins with the relational nature of God, that not only is God revealed truly in other religions, but also that we must understand Christ as a constitutive part of this unified relational reality of

the human response to God because Christ is the sacrament of God's will to save all humankind. It was the event of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ that "opens access to God for all human beings, regardless of their historical situation."⁷⁴

Christian theology must express its relationship with the other religions in terms that move it beyond dialogue and welcomes them as co-participants on the same eschatological journey. It is a matter of discipleship for the Christian Church to communicate this to its members, so it can fulfill what is really required of it in this process of building the reign of God on earth towards its final completion. The sense of convergence of religions must be incorporated into Christian theology so that religious unity is prioritized above differences.

It is the task of interreligious dialogue to turn the potential convergence inherent in the religious traditions into a concrete reality... Interfaith dialogue thus contributes to building up the ROG in history. But, as we know, the ROG in history remains directed toward an eschatological fullness at the end of time. It is permitted to think that convergence between the religious traditions will also attain its goal in the fullness of the ROG. An eschatological 'reheading' in Christ of the religious traditions of the world will take place at the eschaton, and it will respect and preserve the irreducible character which God's self-manifestation through his word and his Spirit has impressed upon each tradition.⁷⁵

An Ecclesiological Vision in a Pluralistic World

As we look forward into the life of the Church as universal sign and instrument of grace in the world, we must think of it in terms of global unity of the shared response to Jesus' call toward the good. We must recognize that our shared values and efforts lead to the same finality. This is a truly inclusive vision of the Church, where the Church stands

⁷⁴ Dupuis, *Toward*, 388.

⁷⁵ Dupuis, *Toward*, 389.

for something more than a membership classification, but a visible sign of the following of the instructions of God as revealed through and modeled by Jesus Christ and the universal guidance of the Holy Spirit, both which have been abundantly present outside of the Church as well. This idea does not render the Church unnecessary or unimportant, but better conforms it to the vision of discipleship to which Jesus has called us. Next, we must recognize the inclusivity of Jesus' words, of the inclusivity of the work of God through the universal Logos and the Holy Spirit, and actively unite our response with other responses expressed in other traditions. Christian ecclesiology ought to express our shared identity, our shared efforts, and in our shared destiny. This is the shape of the Church for a multi-religious world.

This demands a re-identification of what it means to be Christian, in terms of what Christ envisioned for the human race. This would truly require a new perspective, a new identity, and a shift in emphasis (not a complete reformulation) of Christian doctrines.

If the Church conforms its identity and task to that of Christ himself we would necessarily shift our focus to be more Kingdom-centered, as Christ was, more inclusive, as Christ was, and more unifying, as Christ was.

Theology, and particularly theologies which have created exclusionary formulations, would do well to revise this language and formulations in order to free God to be at work in the world and to guide the work of religious people. Dupuis reminds us that it is only God that saves, not religion.

It is an abuse of language, then, to say that religions save or even that Christianity saves. Quite remarkably, early Christian literature refers to what will later be termed "Christianity" as 'the way' of Jesus ...Nor can it

be the intention here to hold that ‘other religious traditions save,’ any more...than does Christianity. What is meant is that they too can be made use of by God as channels of his salvation; they can thus become ways or means conveying the power of the saving God – paths of salvation for the people who ‘walk the path.’ But this does not prejudge the kind of causality, instrumental or sacramental, final or otherwise, operative in them.⁷⁶

Instead, what may be considered is that Christians may not need a way to bring non-Christians into full understanding of the significance that the historical Jesus plays in their lives today and their own search for truth, but rather a way to understand salvation and liberation in a more universal way, one that “has to do with the search for, and attainment of, fullness of life, wholeness, self-realization, and integration.”⁷⁷ This inclusive theology does no damage to the Christian confession that grounds it. Instead, this theology is inclusive for all and yet leaves the constitutive nature of the historical Jesus intact, which frees God to reveal and mediate salvation, and which enables the Church to fulfill her duty as the universal sign and symbol of God’s abiding love and presence for all ages. This paradigm shows God’s saving action as “one and at the same time multifaceted. The mediation of God’s saving grace to humanity takes on different dimensions which need to be combined and integrated.”⁷⁸ While this may be reached by humankind in a variety of “paths,” it still remains Christian in that it always includes the presence of the mystery of Christ, the universal power of the Logos, and the unbound action of the Spirit.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Dupuis, *Toward*, 306.

⁷⁷ Dupuis, *Toward*, 307.

⁷⁸ Dupuis, *Toward*, 316.

⁷⁹ Dupuis, *Toward*, 316-321.

A distinction in ecclesiology is therefore needed. Instead of identifying our Christian nature with the tasks of the apostolic church whose primary concern was evangelization, and the subsequent centuries of theology that developed in response to their own contexts, and thus defined the Christian response in terms of one's allegiance to the Church, we must instead re-conform our identities and re-focus our task on that of Christ's own work in the world, and in Christ's treatment of all people, and of Christ's vision for humanity and, above all, humankind's relationship with God.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH AND THE NOTIFICATION ON THE BOOK *TOWARD A CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM*

Since 1542, the Catholic Church has officially provided the Catholic faithful protection against the threat of distorted theological thinking. Beginning with Pope Paul III and the institution of the Sacred Congregation of the Universal Inquisition, the Church established a provision against unorthodox teaching to ensure that all Catholic doctrine was communicated according to the teaching of the Church. Though its title and its exercise of authority have evolved over the last five hundred years, the institution has always retained the authority to monitor the communication of Catholics, and to defend the faith against “new and unacceptable doctrines.”¹

In 1965, Pope Paul VI gave the organization its current title, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), and conferred on it the primary duty to govern the ideas put forth in the name of the Catholic faith. Its main function is to oversee the production and publication of opinions that might affect the moral life or faith of Catholics and to resolve controversies that arise from such communication. Pope Paul discusses how the

¹ Paul VI. "Profile." The Holy See - The Roman Curia - Congregations - Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. http://www.doctrinafidei.va/documents/rc_con_cfaith_pro_14071997_en.html (accessed May 30, 2013); See also Paul VI. "Apostolic Letter given Motu Proprio *Integrae Servandae*." Vatican: the Holy See. December 1965, 952-955, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19651207_integrae-servandae_en.html (accessed May 31, 2013).

title and exercises of this organization have changed according to cultural changes. The role of the CDF in the present age, in contrast to the earlier days of inquisitions, is to lovingly correct the person or persons responsible for issuing materials that may communicate information that misrepresents Catholic belief.²

The CDF today serves first and foremost to protect the faithful against erroneous or dangerous opinions, or any teaching which might lead to a misunderstanding of Catholic teaching. "In accomplishing this purpose, it renders a service to the truth, by protecting the right of the People of God to receive the Gospel message in its purity and entirety."³ According to Paul VI, the CDF is to promote doctrine by *encouraging* study in the areas of faith and morality. Further, he emphasizes the need to respect the author of a condemned book and allow for defense and correction of errors. He intends that the examination of opinions serves to promote doctrine in order to strengthen the communication of the Gospel. Finally, he finds in the CDF an opportunity to serve the faithful as an interlocutor between the Church and the needs of the changing culture, suggesting that the CDF will advance human culture by providing religious directives that will lead the faithful to greater adhesion and love, and provide them with the reasons for the Church's definitions and laws.⁴

² Pope Paul VI, *Integrae Servandae*.

³ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Ratio Agendi (Regulations for Doctrinal Examinations)" Vatican: the Holy See, (1997), Art. 1, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19970629_ratio-agendi_en.html (accessed May 31, 2013).

⁴ Pope Paul VI, *Integrae Servandae*.

In the present day, the CDF identifies its primary duty to “promote and safeguard the doctrine on faith and morals in the whole Catholic world,”⁵ It does this first by fostering studies that provide answers to questions that arise in changing times and cultures in the light of faith. Further, it helps bishops as the authentic teachers to promote and guard the integrity of the faith. It must therefore prevent the spread of errors which threaten the faith and morals of Catholics. It examines and, if necessary, censures books that express opinions which might endanger the faith of Catholics, and offers an opportunity for the author to explain him- or herself and to correct any errors.⁶

The Notification on *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*

Before discussing the objections to Dupuis’ book, a few words about the Notification itself are worth mentioning. We must do this with the duties and the *raison d’être* of the Congregation in mind. The Preface to the Notification begins by saying that the CDF has proceeded with a comprehensive examination of Dupuis’ book according to chapter three of the *Regulations for Doctrinal Examination*. The process of the examination and the issuing of an official notification follow four general steps:

- Preliminary examination
- Office study
- Ordinary procedure of examination
- Disciplinary measures

⁵ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Regulations for Doctrinal Examination*, Art. 1.

⁶ John Paul II. "Pastor Bonus, - John Paul II - Apostolic Constitution (June 28, 1988)." Vatican: the Holy See. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_19880628_pastor-bonus-roman-curia_en.html#CONGREGATIONS (accessed June 1, 2013).

Preliminary Study involves a first look by the Congresso, the weekly meeting of Superiors and officials of the Congregation, which then decides whether the writing or teaching warrants a more serious investigation. The Office study determines, with the help of expert consultants, whether there ought to be deeper examination. This determination is made upon the degree of seriousness, prominence, dissemination, influence, and harm to the faithful. The Congresso may consult with the author's Ordinary and request that the errors be remedied and submitted to the Congregation.⁷

The ordinary examination (one that does not necessitate urgent action) takes place when there is perceived “grave doctrinal error” and consists of two phases: the internal investigation within the Congregation, and the external phase, during which the objections are presented to the author. Two experts are designated by the Congresso as well as a *relator pro auctore*, who “in a spirit of truth,” illustrates the “positive aspects of the teaching and the merits of the author, of cooperating in the authentic interpretation of his thought within the overall theological context.”⁸ Reports are submitted to the Consulta, the author's Ordinary, the Consultants, and the *relator pro auctore*, who then discuss their observations and opinions. Following this discussion, a vote is made to determine whether the text contains errors or dangerous ideas, and identifies these in light of the propositions of the *Professio fidei*. The file is then given for the examination of the *Sessione Ordinaria* of the Congregation, which decides whether objections will be

⁷ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Regulations for Doctrinal Examinations*, Articles 6-7.

⁸ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Regulations*, Article 10.

presented to the author, and, if so, which points. This decision is then presented to the Supreme Pontiff for consideration. The objections are presented to the author's Ordinary and an advisor to the author, and require a written response within three months. A meeting may take place to resolve doctrinal disputes, and if they are not adequately resolved, then the results of the examination are made public. The decisions must be approved by the Supreme Pontiff and communicated to the author's Ordinary, the Episcopal Conference, and to Dicastries when necessary.⁹ If the author does not correct the errors in a manner satisfactory to the *Sessione Ordinaria*, he or she is, by the standards of the CDF, committing an act of heresy, apostasy, or schism.¹⁰

With this background in mind, we now turn to the Notification for the book *Towards a Christian Theology of Pluralism*. First, it is important to recall that the objective of any notification is not to provide an elaborate systematic theology, but to clarify any possible misunderstandings that might arise regarding the official teaching of the Church. In areas of ambiguity, or where theology convolutes or deviates from traditional doctrines, the CDF uses the notification to clarify the teaching of the Catholic faith. According to the Notification issued to Dupuis, the CDF did not intend to judge Dupuis' "subjective thought" but to clarify for the readers the correct Catholic teaching which may have been in question as a result of Dupuis' theology. The Notification states:

The present *Notification* is not meant as a judgment on the author's subjective thought, but rather as a statement of the Church's teaching on

⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Regulations*, Articles 20-22.

¹⁰ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Regulations*, Article 28.

certain aspects of the above-mentioned doctrinal truths, and as a refutation of erroneous or harmful opinions, which, prescind from the author's intentions, could be derived from reading the ambiguous statements and insufficient explanations found in certain sections of the text. In this way, Catholic readers will be given solid criteria for judgment, consistent with the doctrine of the Church, in order to avoid the serious confusion and misunderstanding which could result from reading this book.¹¹

Second, it should be noted that this Notification acknowledges Dupuis' response and recognizes his attempt and desire to communicate the truth of faith in accordance with Catholic doctrine. In accordance with its regulations, the CDF gave Dupuis an opportunity to respond to the areas found questionable by the CDF. As the authority on communication of the proper teaching of Catholic doctrine, however, the CDF's responsibility is to determine these errors, not to compromise on doctrinal disagreements. It should also be noted that the CDF regards the author's signature on a notification as assent to the statements within and his or her commitment to refrain from errors in future publications and theological activity. This is especially significant in this case, as we shall see from Dupuis' response to the Notification. By the CDF's standards, the notification process provides assurance that the perceived threat to the faithful is eradicated. We now turn to the doctrinal clarifications of the Notification, their sources, and the theology to which they objected.

Method and Sources

Faithful to Catholic Tradition, the CDF consulted two sources for the

¹¹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Notification 'Dupuis'." Vatican: the Holy See. January 24, 2001, Preface, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20010124_dupuis_en.html (accessed June 1, 2013).

development of the Notification: Scripture and Tradition. As previously stated, the purpose of a notification is corrective; it is to bring the positions proposed by the theologian back in line with the confession of faith established in the first centuries of Christianity. The statements systematically respond to erroneous points with the CDF's interpretation of Scripture. An analysis of the sources and methods used by the two opposing parties reveals the nature of this controversy, and may pave a way toward better communication among theologians and the Magisterium, and in this case, provide a better foundation for the development of a theology of pluralism.

There is a noticeable difference in the sources used to support the statements in Dupuis' Notification compared to the sources and method found in Dupuis' book, which will be analyzed in greater depth in the following chapters. For now, I will identify the sources for the Notification and their purpose in informing the statements which were used to refute Dupuis' positions.

All of the references are of Magisterial authorship: encyclicals, papal exhortations, and conciliar documents. The bibliography does not include any direct reference to theologians who would be regarded as a part of the Church's intellectual tradition, though it is likely that the theology underlying these documents was developed by the theologians from the history of the Christian tradition. The CDF often cites Scripture, though it neglects to converse with Dupuis' use of and interpretation of Scripture. Instead the CDF uses texts narrowly to support its position without reference to the context or meaning of the Scripture passage. Its proof-text approach myopically responds to Dupuis' points, and does not match the quality of Dupuis' exegesis.

Much of the reference material comes from the twentieth century, apart from a few references to the Council of Trent and the First Vatican Council. Several references come from the Second Vatican Council and later papal statements. Of these, John Paul II's *Redemptoris missio* (1990) is frequently cited, and less often, but still very present, is his statement to the Church in Asia, *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999).

One document of those referenced in the Notification, *Dominus Jesus*, is unique, not only because thirteen of its twenty-three sections are cited as source material for the Notification, and not because it is cited eleven times in the Notification's seventeen footnotes, but because it was authored by the CDF in June 2000, following the publication of Dupuis' book (1997) and preceding the Notification (January 2001). The document itself raised a bit of consternation among ecumenical circles and those involved in building interfaith dialogue.¹² The CDF insists that it is an expository text written for the purpose of clarifying the Catholic position on various doctrinal arguments in light of "recent relativism" communicated in the Church. It states:

The expository language of the Declaration corresponds to its purpose, which is not to treat in a systematic manner the question of the unicity and salvific universality of the mystery of Jesus Christ and the Church, nor to propose solutions to questions that are matters of free theological debate, but rather to set forth again the doctrine of the Catholic faith in these areas, pointing out some fundamental questions that remain open to further development, and refuting specific positions that are erroneous or ambiguous. For this reason, the Declaration takes up what has been taught in previous Magisterial documents, in order to reiterate certain truths that are part of the Church's faith.¹³

¹² Francis Sullivan, "The Impact of Dominus Jesus on Ecumenism," *America*, October 28, 2000, p. 8, <http://americamagazine.org/issue/386/article/impact-dominus-iesus-ecumenism>.

¹³ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Dominus Iesus." Vatican: the Holy See, August 6, 2000, par. 3,

Dominus Jesus states that contemporary relativistic theories “which seek to justify religious pluralism, not only de facto but also *de jure*” threaten the proclamation of the Church. It seems as though the declaration is a more elaborate version of the Notification on Dupuis’ book. It seems to be not only the source for the Notification, but the exhaustive theological response that the CDF might offer, but which does not fit within the parameters of an official notification. In any case, it communicates a strong message to Dupuis and other pluralistic theologians, undercutting their attempts to further the Christian theology of religions and precluding further “threats” of pluralist theologians.

Dominus Jesus explains that Christian revelation is being relativized in light of theologies and philosophies which have led to subjective theologies that are detracting from the truth revealed in Christ. These theologies which relativize the truth are thus undermining the “character of absolute truth and salvific universality” of the mystery of Jesus Christ and the Church. The CDF, then, finds it fitting to respond by demanding assent to many points throughout the document which are to be “firmly believed” by the Catholic faithful.

Dominus Jesus responds to the attempt of theologians who have “superseded the truth” in the following areas in their subjective attempts to justify their pluralistic theologies. All of these topics, in fact, were addressed to Dupuis in the Notification.

Dominus Jesus states the following:

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html (accessed May 28, 2013).

As a consequence, it is held that certain truths have been superseded; for example, the definitive and complete character of the revelation of Jesus Christ, the nature of Christian faith as compared with that of belief in other religions, the inspired nature of the books of Sacred Scripture, the personal unity between the Eternal Word and Jesus of Nazareth, the unity of the economy of the Incarnate Word and the Holy Spirit, the unicity and salvific universality of the mystery of Jesus Christ, the universal salvific mediation of the Church, the inseparability — while recognizing the distinction — of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, and the Church, and the subsistence of the one Church of Christ in the Catholic Church.¹⁴

The remainder of *Dominus Jesus* explains the Catholic position within this outline:

- I. The Fullness and Definitiveness of the Revelation of Jesus Christ
- II. The Incarnate Logos and The Holy Spirit in the Work of Salvation
- III. Unicity and Universality of The Salvific Mystery of Jesus Christ
- IV. Unicity and Unity of the Church
- V. The Church: Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Christ
- VI. The Church and The Other Religions in Relation to Salvation

It seems from this outline that the CDF addresses many of the same points as Dupuis' book.

Dominus Jesus offers more specific explanation and theological background for each argument in *Dominus Jesus* than does the Notification against Dupuis. Not only does this declaration explain these doctrines, however; it insists that the Catholic faithful accept them. The expression “must be firmly believed” appears seven times in the short statement, and it leaves little question that the CDF seeks to respond to relativism by absolutizing certain positions to which Catholics, and particularly Catholic theologians, are to assent.

The Doctrinal Points of the Notification and their Sources

According to the CDF, Dupuis' theology

is not simply a theology of religions, but a theology of religious pluralism, which seeks to investigate, in the light of Christian faith, the significance of the plurality of religious traditions in God's plan for humanity. Aware of the potential

¹⁴ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Jesus*, 4.

problems in this approach, the author does not conceal the possibility that his hypothesis may raise as many questions as it seeks to answer.¹⁵

It finds erroneous, potentially dangerous, or potentially misleading Dupuis' Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and theology of religions. It lists the following as areas in need of correction or clarification;

- the interpretation of the sole and universal salvific mediation of Christ,
- the unicity and completeness of Christ's revelation,
- the universal salvific action of the Holy Spirit,
- the orientation of all people to the Church,
- the value and significance of the salvific function of other religions.¹⁶

I will explore each of the CDF's statements and the central doctrines they wish to preserve, their relationship to Dupuis' work, and the sources upon which they build their response. I will follow with the reactions of Dupuis and other theologians to the *Notification* and its process. In the next chapter, I will use Lonergan's method to analyze the methodological differences between Dupuis and the CDF. Chapter five will determine what this dispute, as interpreted through Lonergan's transcendental theological method, suggests for the future of theology and the Catholic Church as it continues to develop more inclusive theologies.

On the Sole and Universal Salvific Mediation of Jesus Christ and on the Unicity and Completeness of Revelation of Jesus Christ

The first doctrinal point listed by the CDF regards the interpretation of the sole and universal salvific mediation of Christ. The CDF clarifies the Church's teaching

¹⁵ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Notification*, Preface.

¹⁶ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Notification*.

against Dupuis' theology with two explanations:

It must be firmly believed that Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, crucified and risen, is the sole and universal mediator of salvation for all humanity.¹⁷

It must also be firmly believed that Jesus of Nazareth, Son of Mary and only Saviour of the world, is the Son and Word of the Father. For the unity of the divine plan of salvation centred in Jesus Christ, it must also be held that the salvific action of the Word is accomplished in and through Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of the Father, as mediator of salvation for all humanity. It is therefore contrary to the Catholic faith not only to posit a separation between the Word and Jesus, or between the Word's salvific activity and that of Jesus, but also to maintain that there is a salvific activity of the Word as such in his divinity, independent of the humanity of the Incarnate Word.¹⁸

The CDF's primary doctrinal interest here is preserving the identity and nature of Jesus Christ and his role in the divine plan of salvation. The following teachings are upheld, as rebuttal to the Dupuis' Christology from the perspective of the CDF.

- Jesus of Nazareth has fully two natures: one divine and one human. This is to state that Jesus is a fully human person who was born and died, and at once the eternal Christ, second person of the Trinity.
- God's plan for human salvation rests upon this dual nature of Christ, so that the economy of salvation has at its center the historical Jesus who also exists as the eternal Word of God. The economy of salvation does not exist apart from the two natures being united in one person.
- Not only are the two natures united, but the salvific activity of both is always united; that is to say that the pre-existent Word of God does not act apart from the historical

¹⁷ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Notification*, 1.

¹⁸ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Notification*, 2.

person of Jesus. This is because the salvific action of the Word is only accomplished through the historical person of Jesus.

- Jesus is the only mediator of salvation, because it is through only him that the divine plan of salvation is achieved.
- Salvation is mediated for all humanity.

The second Christological point made by the CDF concerns the unicity and completeness of revelation of Jesus Christ, with the following explanations:

It must be firmly believed that Jesus Christ is the mediator, the fulfilment and the completeness of revelation. It is therefore contrary to the Catholic faith to maintain that revelation in Jesus Christ (or the revelation of Jesus Christ) is limited, incomplete or imperfect. Moreover, although full knowledge of divine revelation will be had only on the day of the Lord's coming in glory, the historical revelation of Jesus Christ offers everything necessary for man's salvation and has no need of completion by other religions.¹⁹

It is consistent with Catholic doctrine to hold that the seeds of truth and goodness that exist in other religions are a certain participation in truths contained in the revelation of or in Jesus Christ. However, it is erroneous to hold that such elements of truth and goodness, or some of them, do not derive ultimately from the source-mediation of Jesus Christ.²⁰

The following teachings on Christ's salvific nature are affirmed by these statements:

- Jesus is the one and only, unique revealer of God.
- God is revealed fully only through Jesus, and this revelation is complete, unlimited, and perfect, though will be made more completely known in the future.
- Human beings have all the knowledge necessary for our salvation.
- No other religion can complete the knowledge for revelation given by Jesus.

¹⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Notification*, 3.

²⁰ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Notification*, 4.

- All truth contained in other religious traditions are participation in the same truth revealed by Jesus, and derive from the mediation of Jesus Christ.

These points represent the traditional teaching on the person and activity of Jesus, are stated in the Creeds, and constitute the core belief of Christianity. This Notification reiterates the belief as professed as a matter of faith for Catholics. It is not entirely clear, however, whether the CDF disagrees with Dupuis on the nature and salvific function of Jesus, or it simply wants to elucidate this for Catholic readers who might misinterpret Dupuis' work. In either case, it certainly aims to preserve the dual nature of Christ and the necessity of the dual nature for his salvific effect. The CDF's main concern appears to be a distinction between the Logos and the person of Jesus, and the postulation that Christ engages in salvific activity apart from that of the historical Jesus. It would follow from such a belief that salvation may occur outside the historical Christ-event, thereby eliminating the necessity of the incarnation of Christ altogether. Theologically, then, the CDF's primary concern is to preserve and communicate that the dual nature of Christ in God's plan of salvation serves as the cornerstone of Christian belief.

The Notification offers several references in support of its response to Dupuis. To understand the position of the CDF more fully, it will be helpful to look through these sources and uncover the theology that might contribute to the pronouncements made in response to Dupuis' book. The sources for first two arguments date from the Decree *De peccato originali* (Decree on Original Sin) from the Council of Trent in 1546 to the twenty-first century, with the publication *Dominus Jesus* by the CDF in 2000. Some themes consistently appear throughout these texts in support of the CDF's claims.

First, many of the documents cited insist on the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins. *De Peccato Originali* emphasizes the need to overcome original sin, which is only accomplished through the one Lord Jesus Christ. The sixteenth-century document states that Christ is the one and only mediator, and it is only through his dual nature that one may overcome the sin that has been passed on through the inherited sin of Adam.²¹ *Lumen gentium* restates the necessity of baptism as the “door [through which] men [*sic*] enter the Church... Whosoever, therefore, knowing that the Catholic Church was made necessary by Christ, would refuse to enter or remain in it, could not be saved.”²²

The source documents affirm not only the dual nature of Christ, but the final, full, and definitive revelation of God in the person of Jesus. They also illustrate the orientation of the Church to Christ, the role of the Church in mediating Christ’s presence, and the universal nature of this mediation. This has several implications that drive the rest of the Church’s Christocentric theology. First, the mediation of the Church is universal, insofar as it emulates Christ in healing the sinner and bringing good news to the suffering. The Church, likewise, lovingly encompasses all who suffer, all who are poor or afflicted. The Church identifies itself with the sinners in the world who are in continuous need for renewal. Second, the Church is universal because it, as the Body of Christ, encompasses

²¹ Council of Trent: Literally Translated Into English, ed. Theodore Alois Buckley, p. 21, Google Books." Google Books.
http://books.google.com/books?id=P_GDBjERbmUC&dq=%5Bthe+canons+and+decrees+of+the+co&source=gbs_navlinks_s (accessed June 1, 2013).

²² Vatican Council II. "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church - Lumen Gentium." Vatican: the Holy See, 14, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html (accessed June 1, 2013).

all the elements of sanctification and truth, the “gifts that belong to the Church of Christ” and lead to Catholic unity.²³ Since the Church subsists in the Catholic Church, all of these elements of truth are therefore united and encompassed in the Catholic Church. These two documents continue to stress that participation in the Church, both in body and in heart, is necessary for salvation. The ministers of the Church are entrusted with the responsibility to act as shepherds, to reach out to both faithful and infidel, and to “wipe out every kind of separateness, so that the whole human race may be brought into the unity of the family of God.”²⁴ More will be said about the nature and necessity of the Church, but here we see how the CDF unites it firmly to the person and action of Jesus.

The documents of Vatican II in particular describe how the dual nature of Christ offers the answer to the questions of the human person and the human situation. *Gaudium et spes*, for example, is referenced to emphasize that the eternal Christ is the foundation of all realities, the light that elucidates the meaning of our existence, and the goal of all humankind and human history.²⁵ In this sense, then, only Jesus, as participating fully in human life while at once revealing the very image and presence of God, can definitively answer the ultimate human search for meaning. Jesus’ dual nature is therefore constitutive of the completeness of revelation as well as the universality of salvation.

The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of

²³ Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium*, 8.

²⁴ Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium*, 28.

²⁵ Vatican Council II. "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World-Gaudium et Spes." Vatican: the Holy See, 10, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html (accessed June 2, 2013).

man [*sic*] take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. It is not surprising, then, that in Him all the aforementioned truths find their root and attain their crown...Such is the mystery of man [*sic*], and it is a great one, as seen by believers in the light of Christian revelation. Through Christ and in Christ, the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful. Apart from His Gospel, they overwhelm us. Christ has risen, destroying death by His death; He has lavished life upon us so that, as sons in the Son, we can cry out in the Spirit; Abba, Father.²⁶

While many of the texts state the requirement for explicit and full participation in the Church, some statements suggest a more inclusive stance on salvation, stating that Christ, while not separated from the historic Jesus, works in a way that encompasses all of humanity. Through the incarnation, death, and resurrection, Christ unites humankind in his participation in every aspect of humanity. It is through the uniting of the divine with the human person that we understand the universality of God's plan. Thus, it is not a separate act in the economy of salvation, one on the part of the eternal Christ and another on the part of the historical Jesus, that humankind is given the fullness of revelation and salvation. It is through the whole Christ-event that salvation is effected.

For this reason the Council, after affirming the centrality of the Paschal Mystery, went on to declare that 'this applies not only to Christians but to all people of good will in whose hearts grace is secretly at work. Since Christ died for everyone, and since the ultimate calling of each of us comes from God and is therefore a universal one, we are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in this Paschal Mystery in a manner known to God.²⁷

²⁶ Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium*, 22.

²⁷ John Paul II. "Redemptoris missio, Encyclical Letter, John Paul II." Vatican: the Holy See, 10, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html (accessed June 2, 2013).

Even other faiths, which seek the meaning of life through a supreme being, and which find truth through other mediations, are oriented to Christ because of Jesus' unique role in delivering the fullest knowledge of truth available to human beings. Jesus, as the fullest revealer of the ultimate truth, is therefore also the mediation of unity for humankind, not only as the eternal Word, but as the human expression of it. By the very event of the eternal Christ joining the experience of human living, God united all human beings to Christ.

All this holds true not only for Christians, but for all men [*sic*] of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. For, since Christ died for all men [*sic*], and since the ultimate vocation of man [*sic*] is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man [*sic*] the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery.²⁸

These documents demonstrate that all people are included in God's plan of salvation. Indeed, they affirm the goodness and truth found in other religious traditions, but they illustrate that because Jesus was uniquely the fullness of revelation, all truth sought through other traditions truly derives their truths from Jesus, for there need not be any revelation outside that given through Jesus Christ, whose purpose in entering human history was to guide human knowledge to the ultimate truth. These documents illustrate that it is by the inclusive nature of Christ, not apart from the historical Jesus, but through the divine-human event of the Paschal Mystery, that all humans are intrinsically bound by virtue of sharing in the human nature of Jesus and the divine action of reconciling all humans to God through the act of the resurrection. Finally, all are united in the Paschal event.

²⁸ Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium*, 22.

The uniting of humanity to God in uniting the divine with the human is essential to the Trinitarian economy of salvation. While the activity of the eternal Word must never be separated from that of the human Jesus, there follows a similar relationship between the activity of Christ and the Spirit in the economy of salvation. Thus, there are two inseparable factors in the divine plan: the inseparability of the historical Jesus with the eternal Christ, and the activity of Christ as the second person of the Trinity with that of the Holy Spirit. Dupuis' treatment of the role of the Holy Spirit is also taken up by the CDF, to which we now turn.

On the Universal Salvific Action of the Holy Spirit

The Church's faith teaches that the Holy Spirit, working after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is always the Spirit of Christ sent by the Father, who works in a salvific way in Christians as well as non-Christians. It is therefore contrary to the Catholic faith to hold that the salvific action of the Holy Spirit extends beyond the one universal salvific economy of the Incarnate Word.²⁹

This statement is relatively straightforward and affirms these central doctrinal points:

- The Holy Spirit's post-resurrection activity in the world is always salvific through Christ.
- The Holy Spirit is part of the Trinitarian economy.
- The Holy Spirit has some salvific effect for Christians as well as non-Christians.
- The salvific action of the Holy Spirit is always working within the economy of salvation of the historic Jesus and does not conduct separate salvific activity outside of the one divine plan of salvation.

²⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Notification*, 5.

- Salvation is always a matter of the activity of the Trinity and therefore the historic Jesus.

Here the CDF seems to warn against the idea that there is a distinction between the salvific activity of Christ and that of the Spirit. The Notification emphasizes that God only works through one channel of salvation, and the work of the Holy Spirit is always joined with the work of Christ. This, of course, is consonant with the rest of the Trinitarian theology of the Catholic Church which holds that the Trinity always acts as one, and never with different wills. The Spirit's salvific activity, then, in ways only known to God, must not exclude the Word of God, and which must never be separated from the historical Jesus.

The documents used to support the CDF's position repeat the centrality of Jesus as the one and only mediator of salvation. The documents referenced in this objection clearly support the key ideas that the Spirit is always working salvifically in the one and same divine plan of salvation effected through Jesus Christ, that the Spirit works salvifically in both Christians and non-Christians, and that the Spirit does not have a broader or more universal role to play outside the activity of Christ or the person of Jesus.

John Paul II, in *Redemptoris missio*, expresses that salvation occurs through the revelatory and mediatory activity of Christ, and that the work of the Holy Spirit is only done within this divine plan, but that the Spirit may lead one to know God who did not yet know Jesus or the Gospels. While *Redemptoris missio* treats the salvific value of the Spirit quite extensively, it never diverges from the centrality of the Christocentric doctrine of salvation. All who are going to be saved through the Spirit who remain

outside the Church are saved in some way by being led mysteriously into the unity of the Paschal Mystery.

No one, therefore, can enter into communion with God except through Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit. Christ's one, universal mediation, far from being an obstacle on the journey toward God, is the way established by God himself, a fact of which Christ is fully aware. Although participated forms of mediation of different kinds and degrees are not excluded, they acquire meaning and value *only* from Christ's own mediation, and they cannot be understood as parallel or complementary to his.³⁰

The theological necessity to preserve the unity of the work of the Trinity is evident in *Redemptoris missio*. The activity of the Word and the Spirit cannot contradict one another if the Trinity is one. *Dominus Jesus* also addresses the possibility of salvation, even in the situation of disunity with the Catholic Church. It clarifies, however, that the Holy Spirit does not offer an alternative path to salvation outside the revelation of Christ.

The action of the Spirit is not outside or parallel to the action of Christ. There is only one salvific economy of the One and Triune God, realized in the mystery of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God, actualized with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, and extended in its salvific value to all humanity and to the entire universe: "No one, therefore, can enter into communion with God except through Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit."³¹

The Notification, echoing *Dominus Jesus*, addresses the belief that the Spirit is at work outside of the Catholic faith. The CDF, responding to Dupuis' theology, clarifies that though the Spirit is at work in the lives of people of all traditions and pursuits of truth, the Spirit leads to only one truth. This reflects other recent Church documents which

³⁰ John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, 5.

³¹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Jesus*, 12.

acknowledge the merit of those paths of goodness and seeds of truth present in lives of Christians and non-Christians alike.

All this holds true not only for Christians, but for all men of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. For, since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery.³²

The CDF in the Dupuis Notification and other ecclesial statements is careful to note that the Church does not teach that these paths are equal to the Catholic faith or that any contain the full truth or knowledge of God. Because all truth is contained in and through one divine plan, it may only be understood in one way most fully. Therefore, whatever truth and goodness may lead one toward some knowledge of God, only Christianity possesses the fullness of this truth. This truth, however, is inclusive of all people, and participation in it is non-exclusive. Thus, the CDF bases its statement on the acknowledgement that God's work in human history is not entirely exclusive, but that all are indeed unified toward the same common goal of humanity. This goal, however, is only obtained through the one definitive history of salvation through the Trinitarian activity as interpreted by the Catholic Tradition.

Under the Spirit's guidance, the history of salvation unfolds on the stage of the world, indeed of the cosmos, according to the Father's eternal plan. That plan, initiated by the Spirit at the very beginning of creation, is revealed in the Old Testament, is brought to fulfillment through the grace of Jesus Christ, and is carried on in the new creation by the same Spirit until the Lord comes again in glory at the end of time. The Incarnation of the Son of God is the supreme work

³² Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, 22.

of the Holy Spirit.³³

Finally, the Holy Spirit should be understood as a source of unity for all humankind. As Pope John Paul II expressed, just within a few years prior to the Dupuis Notification, the Spirit is a common source of unity of the human family and of the joint movement towards the good and healing of the world. Thus, we can understand the Holy Spirit as the expression of the one truth as shared in the humanity of Jesus Christ, which occurs in every human heart, conscience, and in the search for truth.

Indeed, the Spirit is at the origin of the noble ideals and undertakings which benefit humanity on its journey through history: "The Spirit of God with marvelous foresight directs the course of the ages and renews the face of the earth." The risen Christ "is now at work in human hearts through the strength of his Spirit, not only instilling a desire for the world to come but also thereby animating, purifying and reinforcing the noble aspirations which drive the human family to make its life one that is more human and to direct the whole earth to this end." Again, it is the Spirit who sows the "seeds of the Word" present in various customs and cultures, preparing them for full maturity in Christ.³⁴

The common pursuit of the good and the eternal hope shared by people throughout the ages of human history may not be understood by all to be the acceptance of the Gospel truth, but the Tradition maintains that this pursuit is the work of the Holy Spirit directing all people to the one and same Word as mediated in history.

On the Orientation of All Human Beings to the Church

It must be firmly believed that the Church is sign and instrument of salvation for all people. It is contrary to the Catholic faith to consider the different religions of

³³ John Paul II. "Ecclesia in Asia - John Paul II - Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation (November 6, 1999)." Vatican: the Holy See, 16.
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_06111999_ecclesia-in-asia_en.html (accessed June 2, 2013).

³⁴ John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio* 28.

the world as ways of salvation complementary to the Church.³⁵

According to Catholic doctrine, the followers of other religions are oriented to the Church and are all called to become part of her.³⁶

From this we see that the Congregation wants to firmly establish these doctrines for the readers of Dupuis' book:

- The Church is a sign and instrument of salvation.
- The Church is available to all people.
- There is no way of salvation apart from the Church that completes salvation which has been made available through the Catholic Church.
- All people in the world are oriented to the Church.
- All are invited to join the Church.

Based on its statements, it would seem that the CDF finds Dupuis' ecclesiology erroneous in the following ways:

- Its representation of the Church is too inclusive.
- It suggests that the Church or the sacraments are not necessary for salvation.
- It separates the mission of God from the incarnational event.
- There is equal salvific potential in other religions besides the Church.
- Other religions complement or complete the Church's mission, implying that there is not the fullness of truth possessed in the Church.

³⁵ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Notification*, 6.

³⁶ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Notification*, 7.

In response, the CDF refers to documents primarily from Vatican II and the more recent documents *Redemptoris missio* and *Dominus Jesus*. These documents offer these key points and support the CDF's position in key areas of the Church's ecclesiology:

1. The Church is the New people of God, chosen by God because God wills the salvation of all.
2. The Church is inclusive of all people.
3. The Church transcends time but has entered human history and has a necessary function in salvation history.
4. All people are united in their common human condition and share their common destiny by participation in the Church.
5. The Church is constituted as a structured organization in this world, and the true Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church.
6. The Church, including faith in Christ and baptism, is necessary for salvation.
7. Non-Christians may be saved in spite of not becoming visible members of the Church.

To begin, the Church must be understood as a means of God's communication and participation with the people whom God chooses, which began with the first covenant. Based on this covenantal bond, the Church is inclusive of all who share in the history of the Abrahamic tradition, as they are in a special way oriented to the special plan taking shape through the incarnation of the Word in history. Further, as creations of God, all are

included in the Church because God has willed for us to be reunited to our creator.³⁷

Therefore, the Church exists for all, by virtue of sharing our nature as created and dependent.

The Church is a necessary, visible sign of God's presence for all. The Church must not be thought of as a mere society, but a transcendent reality that engages time and place in a process toward its fulfillment. Therefore, we may partake of this universally, because although its origins have a definite point in human history, its history engages all of creation at every point, in participation with the Holy Spirit.

While it transcends all limits of time and confines of race, the Church is destined to extend to all regions of the earth and so enters into the history of mankind. Moving forward through trial and tribulation, the Church is strengthened by the power of God's grace, which was promised to her by the Lord, so that in the weakness of the flesh she may not waver from perfect fidelity, but remain a bride worthy of her Lord, and moved by the Holy Spirit may never cease to renew herself, until through the Cross she arrives at the light which knows no setting.³⁸

In this way, then, the Catholic Tradition maintains that God's activity is present beyond the activity of the visible limits of the Church. The idea that all are oriented to the Church suggests that everyone partakes in a reality that is not in the limited control of human governance, but by God's governance.

Through this mystical view of the Church, the Catholic Tradition posits two claims. First, one must firmly believe that the Church, faith in Christ, and baptism are necessary for salvation, but that God, in ways known only to God, unites people to the

³⁷ Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium*, 16.

³⁸ Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium*, 9.

Paschal Mystery. Second, those who pursue the truth and who “strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience,” may be saved as well.³⁹

Several of these documents firmly and explicitly state the necessity of the Church, belief in Christ as the one mediator, and baptism for one’s salvation. *Dominus Jesus* demands this belief of Catholics:

The Catholic faithful *are required to profess* that there is an historical continuity — rooted in the apostolic succession — between the Church founded by Christ and the Catholic Church: “This is the single Church of Christ... which our Saviour, after his resurrection, entrusted to Peter’s pastoral care (cf. *Jn* 21:17), commissioning him and the other Apostles to extend and rule her (cf. *Mt* 28:18ff.), erected for all ages as ‘the pillar and mainstay of the truth’ (*1 Tim*3:15).⁴⁰

The document goes on to affirm that the necessity of faith in the Church and baptism cannot be set against the doctrine that God works universally in all for their salvation.

While the Church teaches both doctrines, they are not to be understood as contradictory.

The CDF does not attempt to explain how this works, for, as it states, its purpose is merely to offer an exposition on the stated belief of Catholics on fundamental doctrinal points in the face of religious relativism. The document leaves no room for misunderstanding when it states:

Above all else, it must be *firmly believed* that “the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and baptism (cf. *Mk* 16:16; *Jn* 3:5), and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through baptism as through

³⁹ Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium*, 16.

⁴⁰ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Jesus*, 16.

a door.⁴¹

This statement portrays a very exclusive posture of the Church. One may wonder, then, how the CDF in the next paragraph can make sense of the relationship to Christ and salvation for those who are outside the visible structure of the Church:

For those who are not formally and visibly members of the Church, “salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church, but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation. This grace comes from Christ; it is the result of his sacrifice and is communicated by the Holy Spirit”; it has a relationship with the Church, which “according to the plan of the Father, has her origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit”.⁴²

This is stated in various ways in other recent documents. What is affirmed in all of the documents is that God calls people in a number of mysterious ways to the one truth. The Church teaches that there is only complete truth in Christ. Therefore, it must follow that all who respond to God’s call are responding to the one and same truth. In this way, everyone is related in a special way to the Paschal Mystery, even when this belief is not explicitly stated.

The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Christ and have entered the Church. Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all. But it is clear that today, as in the past, many people do not have an opportunity to come to know or accept the gospel revelation or to enter the Church. The social and cultural conditions in which they live do not permit this, and frequently they have been brought up in

⁴¹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Jesus*, 20; see also Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium*, 14.

⁴² Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Jesus*, 20; see also Vatican Council II, "Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church - *Ad Gentes*." Vatican: the Holy See, 2, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html (accessed June 2, 2013).

other religious traditions. For such people salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation. This grace comes from Christ; it is the result of his Sacrifice and is communicated by the Holy Spirit. It enables each person to attain salvation through his or her free cooperation.⁴³

The position to which the Church objects is the notion that those outside the visible structure of the Church are saved by some means that would be deemed either an alternative or complementary to the Christian truth. If the Church were to accept this, it would suggest that the revelation in Jesus was in some way deficient. Therefore, it must preserve the language of the Church that upholds the fullness of truth revealed completely by Jesus.

The documents also speak to the various ways by which all are unified and incorporated into the Church. God's call is perceivable by every human heart, in its existential search for meaning. The Church, which is founded on Earth from the one who comes with the fullness of meaning for human life and who continues in its activity as a means to serve human life, unites us all by its final and definitive revelation. The central event that gives the Church its identity, the sacrifice of Jesus and his resurrection, was an event that was inclusive of all humanity. Through the universality of the Paschal Mystery, the Church can affirm that all people are thus related to the Church.

[T]his applies not only to Christians but to all people of good will in whose hearts grace is secretly at work. Since Christ died for everyone, and since the ultimate calling of each of us comes from God and is therefore a universal one, we are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in

⁴³ John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, 10.

this Paschal Mystery in a manner known to God.⁴⁴

Finally, the Church unites all people in the participation and witness of those who believe in and respond to the Good News. The Gospel offers an existential answer to every human search. By seeking this knowledge and living in search of its fullness, humankind shares this process of more deeply knowing God. The Church has a unique function in communicating this and sharing this answer to the people of the world.

Newness of life in him is the "Good News" for men and women of every age: all are called to it and destined for it. Indeed, all people are searching for it, albeit at times in a confused way, and have a right to know the value of this gift and to approach it freely. The Church, and every individual Christian within her, may not keep hidden or monopolize this newness and richness which has been received from God's bounty in order to be communicated to all mankind [*sic*].⁴⁵

All are called to this not only because we have an interest in securing a "happier" existence, but because of the intrinsic desire and hope that we have in our transcendence. Thus we are united in our shared nature as creations of God and our shared journey in search of the one truth.

Indeed, the Church, in this way, serves as a sign and instrument of God's presence in the world. Because all humans are on the pursuit of truth and goodness and respond to this in multifaceted ways in their own cultures, the Christian responsibility is to continue to serve the world by communicating this hope and promise to all people. The Church is not only a visible human society, but the work of God for all who are drawn to the revelation of Christ, who speaks to the human heart and conscience.

⁴⁴ John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio* 10; see also Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et spes*, 22.

⁴⁵ John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, 11.

On the Value and Salvific Function of the Religious Traditions

In accordance with Catholic doctrine, it must be held that «whatever the Spirit brings about in human hearts and in the history of peoples, in cultures and religions, serves as a preparation for the Gospel (cf. Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, 16)»- It is therefore legitimate to maintain that the Holy Spirit accomplishes salvation in non-Christians also through those elements of truth and goodness present in the various religions; however, to hold that these religions, considered as such, are ways of salvation, has no foundation in Catholic theology, also because they contain omissions, insufficiencies and errors regarding fundamental truths about God, man and the world. Furthermore, the fact that the elements of truth and goodness present in the various world religions may prepare peoples and cultures to receive the salvific event of Jesus Christ does not imply that the sacred texts of these religions can be considered as complementary to the Old Testament, which is the immediate preparation for the Christ event.⁴⁶

These statements uphold and clarify the following teachings:

- The Spirit is at work in the hearts and histories of peoples in culture and in religion.
- All work of the Spirit is preparation for the Gospel.
- The Holy Spirit accomplishes salvation in non-Christians through the truth and goodness contained within them.
- These religions are not ways of salvation independent of the truth contained in the Gospels.
- Truths contained in other religions do not offer complete knowledge about the human – divine relationship that is satisfactory to attain salvation.
- Preparation for the Gospel does not mean that the revelations offered through them complete in any way the salvation history of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

⁴⁶ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Notification*, 8.

First, this objection seems primarily concerned about stating the value of the information contained in non-Christian traditions and how they are related, but not equivalent to, the deposit of revelation contained in the Christian tradition. The objection seems to respond to an interpretation of Dupuis' position that all religious paths offer equally valid and complete paths to the truth that will lead one to complete knowledge of God and thus his or her salvation. This objection seeks to clarify that the Church does not exclude non-Christians from the possibility of salvation, nor does it condemn what truths are present in the religions and cultures, but that these are only related to the truth which is fully and completely revealed in the Christian religion. In this way, the truths do not contradict each other, but the truths found in non-Christian religions do not add new knowledge or supplement Christ's message. Again, this illustrates how the Church takes care to preserve linguistic continuity, lest the mediatory role of Jesus appear deficient or unnecessary.

The documents used in support of this objection have been cited in previous sections, so to avoid repetition, I will summarize the basic doctrine for this argument, the necessity of all paths toward truth must derive from the one source of truth. If this is accepted, it follows that there cannot be separate truths or various forms of comparable (each complete) paths. Therefore, the work of the Holy Spirit is truly universal and inclusive, and serves to unite people through their common experience of prayer.

The Church's relationship with other religions is dictated by a twofold respect: "Respect for man in his quest for answers to the deepest questions of his life, and respect for the action of the Spirit in man... Every form of the Spirit's presence is to be welcomed with respect and gratitude, but the discernment of this presence is the responsibility of the Church, to which Christ gave his Spirit in order to guide

her into all the truth (cf. Jn 16:13).⁴⁷

It is already clear why the CDF emphasizes the necessity of the Church and the belief in Christ as the sole unique mediator of revelation and salvation. It has also been shown that the Church views the activity of non-Christians as valid paths to truth, and expressions of goodness and authentic responses to God's call. However, the Church deems these other paths to be incomplete if they are not understood in relationship to the truth revealed by the Christ event. Because the ultimate answers to the quest for human meaning come in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, there is no need for any other path that would lend more information. This is well summarized in this oft-cited excerpt from *Nostra aetate*:

Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing "ways," comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men [*sic*]. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself.⁴⁸

When the Notification clarifies the definition of "preparation" for the Gospel, it does not mean that this preparation is the same historical prefiguring of the coming of Christ in the Old Testament. It means, rather, that all truth and goodness that lead people to the

⁴⁷ John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, 29.

⁴⁸ Vatican Council II. "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-christian religions - *Nostra Aetate*." Vatican: the Holy See, 2, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html (accessed June 2, 2013).

ultimate truth in some way give elements of the complete truth that is found only in Christ. In this way, then, even in non-Christians' partial or fragmentary knowledge of truth, they indeed lead one to the complete truth, and in this way prepare one for the Gospel. They do not prepare one for a separate salvific event that would lend to different sort of knowledge or outcome.

Thus, the Church uses the expression "seeds" of the Word as a metaphor for this preparation.

The Church respects and esteems these non Christian religions because they are the living expression of the soul of vast groups of people. They carry within them the echo of thousands of years of searching for God, a quest which is incomplete but often made with great sincerity and righteousness of heart. They possess an impressive patrimony of deeply religious texts. They have taught generations of people how to pray. They are all impregnated with innumerable "seeds of the Word."⁴⁹

The preparation is a spiritual preparation, a common source of the beginning of one's search for the ultimate truth. In this sense, then, all that is good and true in other faiths and cultures lead one toward the common destiny; the Church understands all humankind to be united within and oriented to itself, to Christ, and to the one and same kingdom of God.

The Interpretation of the Notification

There is no doubt that Dupuis suffered personal and professional consequences from the actions of the CDF. Dupuis was sworn to secrecy at the time of the investigation, but later confided in his close friends. Dupuis had intended to include his response to both the

⁴⁹ Paul VI. "Evangelii Nuntiandi - Paolo VI." Vatican: the Holy See, 53, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html (accessed June 2, 2013).

Notification and to *Dominus Jesus* in the epilogues of later publications, but he was discouraged from doing so. Instead, they are published posthumously in a recently published book by William Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*. Dupuis' responses offer his defense of his work along with a critique of the CDF's theological method. His frustration at the CDF's unwillingness to engage in responsible theological dialogue that met the level of Dupuis' own scholarship is evident, and it reveals something about the nature of the investigative process. More will be addressed on this in the following chapters, but it raises the question about the real objective of the CDF, and whether the manner of its exercise of authority truly has service to the faithful as its core interest. It appears to the subject of an investigation that the CDF's claims of dialogue and collaboration with the theologian, as described in its *Regulations* and by Pope Paul VI, are insincere.

Dupuis has revealed that the process of his Notification was marked with secrecy and injustice, a blatant resistance to honest and professional dialogue, and amateurish theological methods which resulted in his censure. The following account of the process of Dupuis' censure is provided by Dupuis in the book *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition* by William Burrows.⁵⁰ According to Dupuis, he was sworn to silence about Vatican communication during the months of his investigation. When the Vatican began the process, he had no prior notion that they were scrutinizing his work. A chronology of the

⁵⁰ William Burrows, *Jacques Dupuis Faces the Inquisition: Two Essays by Jacques Dupuis on Dominus Jesus and the Roman Investigation of His Work* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 74-78. Dupuis' account of the events and his response to the Notification are provided in chapter three of Burrows' book, titled, "The CDF Process and Notification and My Perspectives on Them."

investigative process, as offered by Dupuis, follows.

- September 1998: A letter issued by Cardinal Ratzinger to Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach, indicating an investigation into the book; attached to the letter was a report stating that Dupuis' work contained grave doctrinal errors on the matters of revelation, soteriology, Christology, and the Trinity. Another nine-page document consisted of questions which were to be answered within three months, in complete secrecy.
- On Christmas of 1998, Dupuis sent a one hundred eighty-eight page response to the Vatican.
- On July 27, 1999, Dupuis received a letter in which Cardinal Ratzinger expressed dissatisfaction with Dupuis' answers, stating that they were insufficient to protect the faithful from errors. Accompanying the document was another set of questions, again to be answered in three months and in complete secrecy.
- On November 1, 1999, Dupuis replied with another sixty pages.
- Ten months later, Dupuis was invited to visit with the members of the CDF, Cardinal Ratzinger, Secretary Archbishop Bertone, and Fr. Amado, with the expectation that he would sign the Notification against his book on September 7, two days after the publication date of *Dominus Jesus*. This document had already been approved by the Pope as of June 16. Dupuis did not sign this, as he viewed the CDF's explanations given to each of its eight general points to be misinterpretations or misrepresentations of his work. An agreement to amend the Notification was set, with revisions anticipated by October 2000.

The tone of the first draft of the Notification was much more severe than its third and final form, which, thanks to Dupuis' self-defense and his advocate Fr. Gerald O'Collins, was modified from its condemnatory tone to a more cautionary one. Dupuis refused to sign the first draft because it appeared to him to have been an extremely negligent appraisal of his work. The final draft required a signature before its publication, which Dupuis offered *along with a statement* indicating what his signature intended and what it did not. Nonetheless, the published Notification was prefaced it with a statement that inferred the intention of the signature without Dupuis' consent, presenting it as a sort of admission of guilt, ignoring Dupuis' statement altogether.

This Notification, approved by the Holy Father in the Audience of November 24, 2000, was presented to Father Jacques Dupuis and was accepted by him. By signing the text, the author committed himself to assent to the stated theses and, in his future theological activity and publications, to hold the doctrinal contents indicated in the Notification, the text of which must be included in any reprinting or further editions of his book, as well as in all translations.⁵¹

Dupuis' explicitly informed the CDF that this was not his intention with his signature. It was evidently ignored in the publication of the Notification.

When the process began, there was no opportunity for Dupuis to personally respond to the accusations before the Vatican proceeded with its investigation, and no ability for him to stop it. When the Vatican asked for a response to several questions, Dupuis quickly responded in writing and heard nothing for seven full months, only then to receive a request for more explanation. Finally, Dupuis had occasion to visit with the prefect of the CDF, then Cardinal Ratzinger, who admitted to having had no time to

⁵¹ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 77. This is from Dupuis' essay, "The CDF Process and Notification and My Perspectives on Them."

review Dupuis' responses, which had amounted to one hundred seventy seven pages of clarification on the CDF's condemnations. This alone reveals the injustice of the process of the present-day inquisition. The CDF did end up modifying its original statement on Dupuis' work, finding that, after talking with him and O'Collins, the "grave deficiencies" they found had been based on misunderstandings and misrepresentations of his work by the initial readers. The description of Dupuis' work, by the final Notification, had been modified its claim of "grave deficiencies" to "notable ambiguities and difficulties on important points," which had potential to lead the reader to error. This modification signaled that the CDF had admitted to a narrow appraisal, but could not back down for political reasons. Dupuis suspected that he was being used as an example for other theologians who might veer toward less traditional language in the field of religious pluralism, and that the Notification may have been intended as a message to the Asian Catholic theologians, to define the limits of their discussions, who were also receiving some scrutiny at the time.⁵²

In Burrows' book, Dupuis includes substantial commentary on each of the points made by the CDF. His comments respond more exhaustively than the scope of this paper will allow, but I will remark on the overall method of the CDF as Dupuis saw it. Dupuis described not only the underhandedness of the CDF, but offered a solid rebuttal to many of the "ambiguities and difficulties" purported by the CDF. First, he notes that the amateurish method used by the CDF to find and list these "ambiguities" began with an apparent misunderstanding of Dupuis' theology. He notes that it was not likely that

⁵² Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 24.

Ratzinger himself began the inquiry, nor he who analyzed the theology, but the work of one of his hired supporters, who did not seem to comprehend the overall thought or intention of the book. Moreover, the CDF's interpretation seemed to lack a complete understanding of the works cited by Dupuis, and neglected to offer any credible rebuttals, other than proof-texting to support its arguments. Dupuis also noted that the CDF's accusations were not supported with any direct references, nor were page numbers cited, but only general themes listed as overall ambiguous or incompatible with Catholic doctrine.

At the end of a tense session of two hours it became clear that the text submitted to my approval contained false accusations against my book. No quotations from my text, not even references to page numbers of the book, were provided to substantiate these accusations.⁵³

Not only did the CDF conduct a deficient study of his work, its accusations were so general that Dupuis could not clarify his work without interpreting his entire project for them. There were times when Dupuis questioned if they had even understood the work at all. If, prior to the investigation, there had been "dialogue" as the CDF suggests is a part of an investigation, and if the intentions of the CDF were honest, it may have avoided the controversy entirely.

Dupuis also noted in his posthumously published response that the CDF does not clarify its own position on the theology of religions, other than to issue dogmatic statements, which proves Dupuis' point from the beginning: that the Catholic faith in this age calls for a clearer teaching of the theology of religions. The work of the CDF in the

⁵³ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 28. This is from Dupuis' essay, "The Declaration Dominus Iesus and My Perspectives on It."

Notification and in *Dominus Jesus* reinforces Dupuis' entire project. Dupuis recognized the limited scope of the CDF's own research; not only did it do a disservice to Dupuis' research in its negligent analysis, but it even neglected to consider the full context of its own sources, other than *Dominus Jesus*, which was used as the primary source and was created (at least in part) as a response to Dupuis' work. Further, the CDF did not rely on much of the ecclesial documents that *supported* Dupuis' work, and it relied very little on Scripture when developing its positions. In the end, this confirmed Dupuis' argument that the times call for a new approach by the Church and theology to adopt better theological language so we may forward the progress of the theology of religions, and better define the Catholic Church's relationships with the other religions of the world.

Dupuis easily countered every point listed in the Notification. He noted, however, that, had the CDF understood the theology, engaged in dialogue and serious scholarship, it would have found more doctrinal agreement than the Notification presents.

Besides the Notification, equally disconcerting was the publication of *Dominus Jesus* just two days before the scheduled release of the first draft of the Notification. Dupuis has given a response that comprehensively challenges the statements in every section of the document. Besides the theological concerns, Dupuis addresses some general issues with the document itself. First, the document itself is ambiguous when it mentions theologians who are pursuing areas of theology which are falling into the dangers of relativism. Dupuis was not sure what of this document was directed at him, since, like the Notification, it did not name any particular areas of his book, but stated general comments that reflected the CDF's interpretation of certain doctrinal issues.

Dupuis was dismayed when he noticed that several statements in the Notification were egregious misinterpretations of his work and even false accusations. Further, these same points were copied directly from *Dominus Iesus*. Not only did the documents present false accusations, misinterpretations, or misrepresentations of Dupuis' work, they were erroneous themselves, having neglected the broader context of their own sources, the broader history of ecclesial documents, and a narrow-to-non-existent representation of Scripture. To Dupuis, *Dominus Iesus* was not only a step in the wrong direction for the future theology of religions, it was negligent of the work of the Second Vatican Council and may have even been an effort to rein in the momentum which it had begun.

Towards the end of the official meeting at the CDF on September 4, 2000, which I mentioned above, Cardinal Ratzinger asked me: "Would you be willing to declare that your book must be understood in the light of our Declaration *Dominus Iesus*?"...my answer was: "Eminence, I am afraid you are asking too much from me." This Epilogue to this new book—which further explains and clarifies my position—will help the reader to understand the meaning of my discreet but clear answer to the Cardinal Prefect of the CDF. It is time to state summarily the main reasons why I cannot find myself in agreement with the declaration *Dominus Iesus*. I adhere without hesitation, nonetheless, to what is contained in the Declaration when it is certainly doctrine of the faith. I regret, on the other hand, that the Declaration also contains half-truths, in the sense that, while one aspect of the truth is one-sidedly stressed, the complementary aspect is often overlooked altogether. The positive statements of Vatican Council II on other religions have practically been pushed to the way-side.⁵⁴

Reactions to the Investigation and Notification of Dupuis

The case came as a shock to those who knew Dupuis and his work, and it sent a strong message to the theological community. There was strong reaction to the investigative

⁵⁴ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 71. This is from Dupuis' essay, "The Declaration *Dominus Iesus* and My Perspectives on It."

process and to the publication of *Dominus Jesus*. Many theologians supported Dupuis and questioned the motivations of such treatment by the Magisterium.

One of Dupuis' biggest supporters was Cardinal Franz König, who publicly came to Dupuis' defense in *The Tablet*. Besides being a theological ally, Cardinal König was personally affected by the case. The ecclesiological implications of the CDF's actions challenged his own faith in the Church, leaving him wondering what had happened to the spirit of the Council. Like Dupuis, König recognized that the members of the CDF had moved too swiftly and carelessly on Dupuis' case. He remarked that they did not seem to have understood Dupuis' work, or perhaps not even translated it accurately. König was troubled enough that he openly stated that he could not remain silent about the injustice done to Dupuis, to which he received a response from Cardinal Ratzinger, who expressed his sadness and defense of the CDF.⁵⁵

Other theologians were shocked at the news as well, and verified Dupuis' reputation for orthodoxy as well as his life-long commitment to his faith and his sincere respect for non-Christians. Fr. Gerald O'Collins and Archbishop D'Souza expressed their astonishment at the response of the CDF. D'Souza mentioned that Dupuis' work represented the task of the theologian with excellence and integrity. In defense of Dupuis' progressive attempt to build such a theology of inclusivism, he reminded his readers that the task of the theologian is not simply to repeat the past, but to creatively

⁵⁵ Franz König, "In Defence of Fr. Dupuis," *The Tablet*, January 16, 1999, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/page/jacquesdupuis> (accessed June 2, 2013).

go beyond, even when it must tackle the tough questions we face.⁵⁶

Ladislav Orsy published an article revealing the updated procedures of the CDF, effective 1997, which were to reflect the changing times. Orsy describes the process which has been laid out in this chapter, and offers his own reflection, noting in particular the ambiguity of the definitions included in the procedures, such as the use of words like ‘dangerous’ and ‘erroneous doctrines.’ Orsy describes how standards of justice are not practiced by the CDF in a way that most civilizations have structured their justice systems, due to the potential bias of the different parties and human error. He notes the practices of the CDF are counterproductive to serving justice:

Justice is best served when in the process the respective roles of the judge, the prosecutor, and the defendant are kept apart. The aim of any judicial process is to help the judge (or jury) arrive at an impartial and detached judgment. The accumulated experience of courts and tribunals (an experience that has its origin in ancient civilisations) has shown that when the roles are fused, justice is imperilled... In the "Regulations for the Examination of Doctrines" this classical distinction is not honoured. The same organs of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith initiate the investigation, establish the charges, and then pronounce judgment over both the writings and the writer. In practice, the same persons are investigators, prosecutors, and judges.⁵⁷

He goes on to say that in the CDF’s process, there is no representation by the defendant, not even knowledge that his or her work is being investigated. Thus, the system assumes

⁵⁶ Gerard O’Connell. "Theological Contributions of Jesuit Jacques Dupuis Celebrated in Rome," ucanews.com. http://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/2004/01/27/theological-contributions-of-jesuit-jacques-dupuis-celebrated-in-rome-ucan-column-vatican-vista-by-a-hrefjavascriptcromelesswinbfmapasppnamegerardoconnellphotogerardconnellgif00150480testbytes-onfocust&post_id=23711 (accessed June 3, 2013).

⁵⁷ Ladislav Orsy, "Justice Begins at Home." The Tablet - International Catholic weekly newspaper, January 16, 1999, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/page/jacquesdupuis> (accessed June 3, 2013).

the favor of the investigators, because, when it comes time for the process to go forward, the investigators have already been granted the authority of the pope, and in the end, they are the only authority on the matter. This kind of investigation is weighted with papal authority without the consultation or input of the party being investigated. In fact, the party being investigated has already been under investigation, and the outcome pre-determined. Dupuis' case is the perfect example.

In other words, the notice of the condemnation is spread and the author's reputation is affected without his [*sic*] ever having been notified of any problem, let alone having had a possibility to say a word in his [*sic*] own defence.⁵⁸

Just as discouraging as the ambiguous language or the biased process is the potential damage which is often a consequence of such action by the authority of Rome. Orsy points out the disastrous consequences of past excommunications (which the Church has later come to regret) which have caused irreparable damage to this day. One might think we would learn from this sort of exercise of authority (which may be more aptly named an abuse of power) at some point in our history, but at this point, this is how it remains. Orsy suggests that the relationship must be repaired between theologians and the Magisterium in order for theology to continue to serve the faith. This must begin with a newfound establishment of trust. This is not only for the integrity of theology, but for the honor of the Second Vatican Council and the future of the Catholic Church.

Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to determine the nature and method of the CDF's process

⁵⁸ Orsy, "Justice Begins at Home."

of examination. We have explored this in its own terms, through the perspective of Dupuis who has undergone such investigation, and the views of theologians who have known the work of Dupuis and are loyal to the Catholic Magisterium. While many Catholics would agree that there ought to be a measure of authority over theological communications, and that the CDF's objectives are necessary for safeguarding the faith, many seem to agree that the process is in need of drastic changes to make it more just. The next chapters will demonstrate what Lonergan's method offers to this controversy, and how it gives some insight into restoring the relationship between the Magisterium and the theologian.

While more will be said on the method and theology of the CDF, we may already observe some similarities and differences in the perspectives and methods between the CDF and Dupuis. For example, it is clear that the CDF wishes to preserve the Christocentric foundation of its theology, which Dupuis attempted to overcome in favor of a theocentric approach. We can see, however, from the language and style of the Notification that, rather than debating Dupuis on each and every point, the CDF remained true to its task of stating Catholic doctrine, with brief explanations rooted in Scripture and Tradition (though it is noticeably reliant upon a small selection of ecclesiastical documents, and is very limited in its approach to Scripture). Still, its self-described objective was simply to communicate the Church's official position in a way that informs the reader, in case there would be misinterpretation or confusion based on the reading of Dupuis' text. Dupuis and others wonder, however, if this was the only objective, and, even if so, if this was the necessary means to achieve this. Furthermore, they argue that the full Catholic position was not

adequately represented, but a fragmented perspective which reveals the CDF's bias.

The Notification does its job in stating the Catholic position on what it deems questionable items and leaves no doubt what Catholics are expected to believe, and little room for re-creating any theological approach that leaves Christ out of the center of all God's activity. In terms of fulfilling its responsibility, the CDF followed through with its task to identify possible areas of concern and to address them by explaining the Church's teaching, though its methods have been proven questionable. It is unfortunate that its practice is done in a manner that creates competition and division between faithful theologians and the Magisterium.

The next two chapters will consider the role and duty of the CDF, the relationship between Christian theology and the communication of the Church, and what this situation suggests for the coming days for the Church in the world.

CHAPTER FOUR

LONERGAN'S TRANSCENDENTAL METHOD OF THEOLOGY AS A LENS FOR ANALYSIS

Thus far, I have described the problem of religious pluralism for the Catholic Church, and two different methods of defining the relationship among the religions. I have also demonstrated what difficulty the attempt to better define an inclusive theology of pluralism has caused. This controversy has revealed two problems for the Catholic Church: one is the obstacle presented to Catholic theologians in the development of theologies of religion; the other is the underlying conflict between theologians and the Catholic Magisterium. The objective of this chapter is to use Bernard Lonergan's theological method to identify the theological and methodological differences between the CDF and Jacques Dupuis; to examine the function of theology and the role of religion, particularly religious communication by those who hold authority over this in the Catholic Church; and to determine what this controversy suggests for the future of the Catholic Church, both in the ongoing developments of theologies of pluralism and for the future relationship between theologians and the Magisterium. Chapter five will expand further on this topic.

I propose to use Lonergan's work to demonstrate that the root of the difference in the theologies of the CDF and Dupuis is, in Lonergan's terms, genetic, but that the real

conflict lies not in the theological differences, but in the ensuing controversy resulting from the CDF's response to Dupuis. The consequence for Dupuis and the ongoing struggle for the Church in the area of religious pluralism suggest that there is truly a dialectical difference in the positions and calls for intellectual conversion of the CDF. Such conversion and resolution of this sort of difference is the heart of the objective of Lonergan's work. Chapter five will explore the implications of such differences and the necessity of the conversion on the part of those who exercise magisterial authority.

Lonergan's approach has the broad objective of transforming society to build the kingdom of God, beginning with a transcendental cognitional process. The theological method is based upon functional specialties that correspond to the transcendental process and aims at reducing bias, identifying sources of conflicts, and building foundations for the development of practical theology. Its final goal is not abstract, but a concrete theology which calls for praxis in the Christian Church. I will explore the theological foundations that have led to the conflict and illustrate the relevance of the transcendental method in the resolution of the theological differences. Next, I will explore how the solution to this conflict contributes to his ecclesiological vision, particularly as the Christian Church engages in theology in the contemporary age and how the Catholic faith may determine a theological language that is more congruent with the reality of the other world religions.

An Introduction to Lonergan's Theology

The Functional Specialties are the application of Lonergan's transcendental

method to theology. He understands the theological method to parallel the scientific method, which aims towards the achievement of cumulative results. While I do not intend to give an exhaustive summary of Lonergan's work, a short introduction will provide the rationale for the application of the functional specialties to the Dupuis conflict and may lead to an improved situation for theologians, and free them to continue to advance the theology of religions.

Lonergan's Transcendental Theology

The Transcendental Method relies on the pattern of operations labeled by Lonergan as transcendental precepts: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible, which successively lead to a heightening of consciousness. It is thus a process of progressive transcendence of one's own realm of experience to knowledge of the world and, ultimately, of the world as an encounter of love with God. Through this process, one is changed from a "being" to a "being-in-love," and his or her subsequent actions always intentionally reflect this way of being.

All persons possess the capacity for authenticity. Insofar as one has the ability to make decisions, and the ability to pay attention to, think about, evaluate, and act upon information that requires decision-making, one has the ability to transcend earlier stages of meaning in order to perceive the world through a value-infused hermeneutic and exercise responsible action through a differentiated consciousness.

The question of God, then, lies within man's [*sic*] horizon. Man's transcendental subjectivity is mutilated or abolished, unless he is stretching forth towards the intelligible, the unconditioned, the good of value. The reach, not of his attainment, but of his intending is unrestricted. There lies within his horizon a region for the

divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness. It cannot be ignored.¹

The question of God is answered through an experience of knowing God, surrendering one's prior limits of knowledge, and falling in love with God. One experiences God's love prior to knowing God, and through the process of self-transcendence, one comes to identify the fulfillment of the question; not only of God, but also of the question that has arisen out of the valuation of one's own experiences, one's own life, and that search for meaning which has led one to find an answer beyond the experience itself.

Only through this process of identifying the self as a transcendent subject can one freely engage in the world without bias and as truly responsible. The shift in horizons is only possible when one has identified the limitations of his or her horizon and overcome them. The process that renders one a being-in-love marks one's transition into a truly free, truly responsible, and truly authentic subject.

Realms of Meaning

All conscious people have the potential to conceive of the world in four different realms of meaning when they appropriate their consciousness to the awareness of the manner in which they apprehend, interpret, and judge information. The realms of meaning are:

- the realm of common sense,
- the realm of theory,
- the realm of interiority,
- transcendent exigence.

Each stage represents a heightening of consciousness. The realms correspond to the

¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 103.

transcendental precepts insofar as they contribute to one's apprehension of authenticity and response to God, and to falling in love with God. In fact, it is through the realms of meaning that one becomes aware of the presence of God and the relationship of the meaning of everything else to it.

There is to human inquiry an unrestricted demand for intelligibility. There is to human judgment a demand for the unconditioned. There is to human deliberation a criterion that criticizes every finite good. So it is...that man can reach basic fulfilment, peace, joy, only by moving beyond the realms of common sense, theory, and interiority and into the realm in which God is known and loved.²

This process for individual conversion is relevant to the theologian, the Church, and the process of theology for several reasons. First and foremost, the theological process rests on conversion. No theology or religion that is unconverted or biased may do its task responsibly. Second, the transcendental method achieves the goals of theology for a dynamic world more effectively than traditional methods because it has the dynamic experience of humanity's authentic conversion to God as its starting point, rather than the "content" as interpreted by a small group of people with "authority" on the matter of revelation.

Religion, Society, Conversion, and the Christian Church

Conversion is not only the fruit of the process of transcendence; it is the cornerstone of the entire theological process. But conversion is much more than the hinge of Lonergan's method. It is the event that is meant for every individual who seeks the meaning of his or her existence, or who acts in response to a deeper inclination than

² Lonergan, *Method*, 83-84.

one's own interests, regardless of religious affiliation. The result is a new perspective, a new sense of peace and assurance of truth. Its benefits extend beyond single individuals to effectively transform societies. Religion plays a critical role in mediating this process and for mediating religious values in human contexts.

Self-transcendence and conversion are necessary to authenticity. Robert Doran, S.J., describes the relationship among these three:

What makes a person an authentic human being is that he or she is consistently self-transcending, and consistent self-transcendence requires that one undergo a multiple and ongoing process of conversion. The process moves causally, if you wish, from conversion to self-transcendence, and from self-transcendence to authenticity.³

The person who lives authentically embraces life in a different manner; one lives life as self-differentiated, whereby he or she understands the self as participating in the different realms of meaning with a heightened consciousness, not just of what one is experiencing, but of the meaning of one's experiences and the call to act responsibly. And this is the place of religion, which mediates values that carry meaning for the person who knows God and who lives responsibly; after considering and judging the data, one determines what is real from common sense, theory, interiority, and transcendence. For people operate in the world of common sense, where meaning may take shape in the day-to-day operations of the world, in every intentional act that grounds one's living. Conversion of peoples occurs when there is a shift in horizons by which individuals begin to interact and share meaning through the intersection of horizons, where one's value leads not only

³ Robert Doran, "What Does Bernard Lonergan Mean by Conversion?" *Lonergan Resource*, <http://www.lonerganresource.com/lectures.php> (accessed 22 June 2013).

to the good of the self, but to the good of others.

Religion is, in part, the expression of one's search for meaning, of one's love for God, and the intentional manner of living which is attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible. Religion must offer the articulation and mediation of such meaning when a transcendent reality enters into human history and shapes its structures and processes. Religion begins first as an unmediated experience of the love of God. Only after one has experienced the flooding of the heart by God's love is the "word" of religion mediated in the world of meaning, where it becomes meaningful in history and contexts, where it is received according to particular interpretations of what it means to know and experience the love of God. Religion as first an experience of God flooding our hearts moves one to the recognition that this change that has occurred; there is a need to understand this word. Religion provides the avenue that gives meaning to the realms of experience, where the word then becomes mediated through the historical events that have brought the human encounter into knowledge of the divine. Religion thus transforms life in every aspect, and most profoundly in human relationships, where love is manifested in the everyday experiences and interpersonal encounters of one's life.

The narrative of religious origins is the narrative of God's encounter with his people. Religious effort towards authenticity through prayer and penance and religious love of all men shown in good deeds become an apostolate, for "... you will recognize them by their fruits" (Mt. 7, 20).⁴

Religion must effectively shape the realm of common sense. It is shared in community

⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 119.

which responds to the mediated word of God together, where God's inner word becomes the outward communication of God's love shared by religious communities.

Many world religions offer an organized mediation of the immanence and transcendence of God.⁵ Religions in their spiritual practices, in prayer and contemplation, in the outward activity of loving one's neighbor, and the care of creation, share in the gift of God's love. Therefore, the transcendental process, and the path towards living authentically, begins with one's experiences and intentional activity which direct life's meaning outward from the self and toward the transcendent. Though religious belief and expression may vary, among all religions is a deeper unity which arises out of the common judgments of value that have been illuminated out of "the eye of religious love, an eye that can discern God's self-disclosures."⁶ No religion, therefore, is excluded from Lonergan's category of religious conversion, as conversion is an event between the transcending individual or community and God.

Religion has the single responsibility to aid the world in its knowledge of God, in whatever ways faith is made concrete. The Christian religion, more specifically, is to communicate to its believers the redemptive love of Christ which is transformative for all of human society.

We may note that a religion that promotes self-transcendence to the point, not merely of justice, but of self-sacrificing love, will have a redemptive role in human society inasmuch as such love can undo the mischief of decline and restore

⁵ Although Lonergan would not exclude Buddhism from the discussion, a lengthier discussion on Buddhism as a religion is possible, but must be left for a separate discussion.

⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 119.

the cumulative process of progress.⁷

For the Christian religion, the redemptive activity and communication of the Church is always directed at building the kingdom of God. Religion, if authentic, facilitates progress and reduces decline.

Insofar as all humans are oriented to God and all respond to God through their exercise of the transcendental precepts and act responsibly according to judgments based on values, the kingdom of God is all-inclusive. The Christian mediation of this meaning and the activity of the Christian Church rest on the activity of the historical Church, but does not exclude those who seek God outside the historical event of Jesus Christ, or even atheists. The Christian Church, therefore, will not only contribute to the progress of society, but it will be united with other religions in its authentic conversion to God to collaboratively further progress.

The Redemptive Activity of the Church

Though I will say more about the Church and Communications later in this chapter, I want to first illustrate the centrality of the Church for Lonergan in mediating meaning for the conversion of society. For Lonergan, the Church is where divine communication and its encounter in human context meet. It has the responsibility of making this encounter meaningful for human cultures across time.

All religious traditions that give expression to the transcendental process facilitate

⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 55.

the life of authenticity. The origin of the Christian tradition is the witness of the belief in the ultimate expression of divine love in human history, the assurance to the faithful of our redemption through the raising of Jesus from the dead. Lonergan states that God's grace is bestowed upon all, but Christian identity rests on the historical mediation of universal grace through the Christ-event:

What distinguishes the Christians, then, is not God's grace, which he shares with others, but the mediation of God's grace through Jesus Christ our Lord.⁸

Belief in Christ precedes philosophy or dogma, and all of the Church's activity must be structured around this experience of the witness of God's love, above all else. Lonergan suggests that theology in our contemporary time should be based empirically, as it was for the nascent Christian community.

The Church, though participating in a transcendent reality, is grounded in and affects human history. Therefore, the Church's mission and witness must constantly respond to the world in every context, and must address the human situation as a dynamic structure, conscious of the transformation of the human situation in the world. In an address to the Canon Law Society of America in 1966, Lonergan addressed the question of the adaptation and direction of the Church as a community of love; for effective mission and witness as it addresses the world.⁹ Quoting Fr. James Coriden of the Catholic University of America from a letter from July 1966, Lonergan says, "the pattern

⁸ Bernard Lonergan, "The Future of Christianity," *A Second Collection*, ed. William F.J. Ryan, S.J. and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1974), 156.

⁹ Bernard Lonergan. "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical-Mindedness," *A Second Collection*, ed. William F.J. Ryan, S.J. and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1974), 1.

of adaptation and change appears to be a mandate based on the very nature and mission of the Church, just as growth and development are inherent in the nature of a living organism.”¹⁰ Adaptive communication is constitutive to Christian witness.

Alienation is the Lonerganian analog to sin. When humankind has rejected its inclination toward self-transcendence, it has fallen into alienation from God; it has hindered its opportunity to find its fulfillment, obstructed its conversion. Thus, the Church may be redemptive in its response to the on-going procession of human societies toward progress. For Lonergan, the mission of the Church is to reverse the effect of alienation. The Church, he says, is an “out-going process.”

The Church must be always responsive to the vicissitudes of human cultures and meaning, for it must always have as its first task to lead all people to the knowledge and love of God, to mediate the foundation for the transcendental process and communicate meaning and value. This redemptive process of the Church originates from and emulates the redemptive act of Christ himself, who, through the incarnation paradigmatically remedied the alienation of the human condition in a manner that transcended even the religious boundaries of his day. Christ embodies the fulfillment of the human desire for union with God, and thus exemplifies the fulfillment of human self-transcendence.

Communities, societies, and cultures are always dynamic and unfolding. The processes, structures, and events and their consequences always contribute to either the progress or decline of the society. The advancement of technology, culture, economy,

¹⁰ Lonergan, “Transition,” 1. Lonergan is using Fr. Coriden’s statement as his starting point for his discussion on the position on the classicist versus historical-mindedness in theology and doctrines.

politics, and religion may all contribute to the direction of a society, but it does not guarantee progress, but may rather contribute to the decline of a society.

Objectively absurd situations do not yield to treatment. Corrupt minds have a flair for picking the mistaken solution and insisting that it alone is intelligent, reasonable, good. Imperceptibly the corruption spreads from the harsh sphere of material advantage and power to the mass media, the stylish journals, the literary movements, the educational process, the reigning philosophies. A civilization in decline digs its own grave with a relentless consistency.¹¹

These ideologies justify alienation; they reinforce the consistent disregard of the transcendental precepts. As an individual or a group continues to reject and justify the rejection of the transcendental precepts, society will cumulatively decline.

Christianity, among other religions, is the response to the natural human processes of progress and decline. Lonergan follows Aquinas by basing his method on the premise that people are inclined toward the good, and that human societies are in continuous motion. However, people receive their sense of goodness and truth through culture, and sometimes cultures reinforce ideologies that resist authenticity, that give illusions of goodness, and rather than moving toward progress, they are in a motion toward decline. While progress results from societies living authentically, decline is the consequence of progressive alienation, of that which distracts humankind from its process of transcendence.

To live intelligently, reasonably, responsibly, an adult has to form some view of the universe, of man's [*sic*] place in the universe, of his role along with other men. He may do so by appealing to myth, or to science, or to philosophy, or to religion...He may confront what he beholds, or try to escape in debauchery and

¹¹ Lonergan, *Method*, 55.

drugs, or rage fanatically against it, or collapse in existential despair. Such is the human condition and such the human problem.¹²

The Dupuis controversy calls attention to a few concerns regarding the communication of the Catholic faith. The first is whether the Magisterium is the only participant in what is communicated in the Christian faith. Second, what, if any, is the role of the theologian in communicating to the Catholic faithful, when the Magisterium oversees and determines what is communicated? This controversy highlights the critical need for authenticity in the religious communication. We shall explore the distinct roles of theology and the Catholic hierarchy and their mutual contributions to authentic Christian life. I will show that the use of Lonergan's theological method precipitates an authentic theology, and that the Catholic Church is driven by the collaborative contributions of theology which risks asking new questions and keeps the faith from becoming dormant or antiquated. We may posit that, in Lonergan's terms, the Dupuis controversy stands as an example of a refusal of the contemporary Church authorities to risk accommodating new questions and new data. Lonergan describes "method" as "a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results."¹³ In light of this definition, it appears that the CDF would rather avoid anything cumulative and progressive, but rely on what it has already defined as true. Dupuis shows us the danger of such thinking, that new data raises questions that demand answers. Lonergan shows us that resistance to an authentic method yields nothing by way of meaning for a changing world, and will

¹² Lonergan, "Future of Christianity," *A Second Collection*, 155.

¹³ Lonergan, *Method*, 5.

ultimately lead to decline.

If the Church is the community of love which effects the kingdom of God by redeeming humanity in its situation of progress and decline, what does this mean for the controversy over the theological and ecclesiological meaning of religious pluralism? And further, what does this conflict mean for the future of the Church and the theologians' place in the ministry of the Church in the world? Lonergan asserts that even those who have experienced religious conversion and share a unified faith may not be converted in the other ways of intellectual conversion and moral conversion, and this is one basis for disagreements that arise within religion and religious beliefs. To this disagreement we now turn.

The Transcendental Method as Theological Method

Lonergan's transcendental method may be deemed a method that parallels the scientific method, insofar as it is normative and yields progressive and cumulative results.¹⁴ Just as an individual progresses through stages of meaning and exercises his or her capacity for the transcendental notions, the theological method makes use of these operations with the objective of achieving a converted theology. Because the theological method yields results and these results inform Christians, the theological process and its conclusions must be free of bias. The stages of the method correspond to the transcendental precepts: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible. These precepts are the basic conscious actions by which one navigates the different stages of meaning. Each stage transcends the previous one, but eventually, the four precepts allow

¹⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 14.

one to understand with objectivity and become able to make value judgments based on responsibly-interpreted data.

A brief summary of the functional specializations must be offered here because these determine whether a method is authentic and bias-free, which is one of the central concerns of this study. Since the method relies on the interdependence of all eight of the specializations, I will provide a brief overview of these, with special attention to Doctrines, Dialectic, and Communications, inasmuch as these are central to the Dupuis controversy.

The Functional Specialties

The functional specializations lessen the tendency toward bias and overcome the limitations of content- or field specializations that commonly characterize theology and the theological process. Lonergan finds that the method must not only be more collaborative among the different fields of theology, but must incorporate the tools found in other disciplines. For theology to offer an authentic interpretation and be communicated authentically, every task ought to be executed to yield truthful and unbiased results. Whereas field specialization compartmentalizes the data and their interpretation, functional specialization allows for a more comprehensive synthesis of all the data relevant to a particular issue. Therefore, instead of relying on the content limitations of a field specialist, the process keeps the integrity of the method so that any relevant data are not occluded by the limited view of the content or the viewpoint of the researcher.

The functional specialties are the following: Research, Interpretation, History,

Dialectic, Foundations, Doctrines, Systematics, and Communications. The functional specialties correspond to the transcendental notions and realms of meaning. Second, they are all interdependently related. Third, the theologian's own conversion process is constitutive of the transcendental method, for it informs the reflection on research, interpretation, history, and dialectic which provides the foundations of the mediated phase of the theological method.¹⁵

The eightfold division is divided into two phases: the first is the "mediating phase," a reflection on theology, which leads us to "knowledge of the Body of Christ."

There is, then, reciprocal dependence within each of the two phases, and this was only to be expected since the four levels of conscious and intentional operations (which determine the four specialties in each phase) are themselves interdependent. Further there is dependence of the second phase on the first, for the second confronts the present and future in the light of what has been assimilated from the past.¹⁶

The second phase is the "mediated phase," which is "knowledge of God and of all things as ordered to God...but as God is known mediately through the whole Christ, Head and members."¹⁷ Theological method requires both a reflection on the past as well as the development of theology for the future, and this constitutes the two phases.

Oratione oblique that tells what Paul and John, Augustine and Aquinas, and anyone else had to say about God and the economy of salvation. But there is also a theology in *oratione recta* in which the theologian, enlightened by the past, confronts the problems of his own day.¹⁸

¹⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 133-35.

¹⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 142.

¹⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 135.

¹⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 133.

The method follows the levels of intentional operations insofar as each phase corresponds to the same ends as each of the levels of conscious and intentional operations. There are eight “tasks” to be performed and a distinction must be established between each of the precepts. This is necessary because each specialty has something of its own to contribute, but its contributions are always related to the total outcome, meaning that each specialty functions as a part of the whole. This prevents one specialty from becoming the final and definitive contribution of theology. Lonergan says, “the man with the blind-spot is fond of concluding that his [*sic*] specialty is to be pursued because of its excellence and by themselves they are insufficient. From such one-sidedness theology has suffered gravely from the middle ages to the present day.” The functional specialties prevent such a myopic approach to a theological conclusion. Each one is dependent on the other seven to complete its meaning. This completeness of the theology, then, corresponds to the manner by which one attains objectivity through the transcendental precepts and realms of meaning.

The functional specialties correspond to the levels of meaning as follows:¹⁹

Table 1: Functional Specializations and the Transcendental Precepts

Intentional Operation	Objective	Functional Specialization	
		First Phase (mediating)	Second Phase (mediated)
Experiencing	Apprehension of Data	Research (1st)	Communications (8 th)
Understanding	Insight into apprehended data	Interpretation (2nd)	Systematics (7 th)
Judgment	Acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses and theories put forward by understanding	History (3rd)	Doctrines (6th)
Decision	Acknowledgment of values and the selection of the methods or other means that lead to their realization	Dialectic (4th)	Foundations (5th)

While field specialization attempts to answer questions within one particular area of theology (such as history or doctrines), the functional specializations approach theology as a series of tasks that contribute to the overall theological perspective. The objective of this transcendental method is not to achieve one particular outcome for each operation, though each has a unique and necessary value, but the comprehensive end of all the operations. There is eventually a cumulative effect that is gained from the execution of each specialty. Similar to the way in which the intentional operations function for consciousness, insofar as a person does not simply perform one singular operation that remains distinct from the other operations, the functional specialties are always performed interdependently, aiming at an objective, unbiased, realistic, and complete

¹⁹ Lonergan, *Method*, 133-135.

theological position.

In the first phase one begins from the data and moves through meanings and facts towards personal encounter. In the second phase one begins from reflection on authentic conversion, employs it as the horizon within which doctrines are to be apprehended and an understanding of their content sought, and finally moves to a creative exploration of communications differentiated according to media, according to classes of men, and according to common cultural interests.²⁰

The first phase is a reflection on religious experience, specifically a reflection on Christ as interpreted through Christian tradition. The second phase, building from foundations which are newly laid from the first phase, aims to bring knowledge of God into the realm of commonsense. The second phase is an inverse order to the first phase beginning from the reflection on the information produced from the first phase.

The notion of horizon is critical to the method, for it is the horizon that determines the outcome of the second phase. Lonergan describes horizon as “boundaries that limit our capacities for assimilating more than we have already attained.”²¹ The expansion of these boundaries is a process of identifying the limits of one’s own horizon and an authentic engagement with another. Prior to conversion, one remains within one’s horizon, where one is content to experience, understand, and judge the world without having yielded to the transcended perspective and change of consciousness that occurs when God’s love frees one to take a new look. Robert Doran explains Lonergan’s idea of horizon as the boundaries of one’s field of vision; these horizons form the boundaries of one’s knowledge.

²⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 135.

²¹ Lonergan, *Method*, 237.

A horizon is the limit of what one *knows* and *is interested in*. What lies beyond the horizon is not only what one does not know but what one has no desire to know and what you don't even know exists to be known. There can be much within your horizon that you don't know but want to know.²²

Whether a person is converted or not determines what side of a conflict he or she will prefer. The side which one takes in a conflict will determine the direction and outcome of the rest of the development of theology.

The mediating phase of theology has considered the resources that have provided information about God through data, history, interpretations. It serves to formulate the language and definitions that facilitate the Christian meaning toward progress which results from the conversion of peoples through their involvement in religion.

It was no longer to be content to narrate what others proposed, believed, did. It has to pronounce which doctrines were true, how they could be reconciled with one another and with the conclusions of science, philosophy, history, and how they could be communicated appropriately to the members of each class in every culture.²³

The second phase brings forth a theology from this new foundation, the new horizon, which liberates theology and the theologian (or the Magisterium) from merely repeating what he or she has learned, and to mediate the meaning of the revealed truth through the levels of interiority, theory (doctrines), and common sense (communications), the language of every day in and for a particular culture. The functional specialty Foundations is built upon by the first specialties and lays the groundwork for the final three. Foundations is the bridge between the two phases of theology: the first which

²² Doran, "What Does Bernard Lonergan Mean by 'Conversion'?" *Lectures*.

²³ Lonergan, *Method*, 267.

reflects on the data gained in the first set of specialties, and the second which constructs theology using the final specialties.

Conversion, as the heart of foundations, is a change of position, an exercise of our “vertical liberty” to migrate from one standpoint to one that is better, moving from “one set of roots to another.”²⁴ This might suggest a sort of abandonment from previous accepted truths in favor of new truths, but what Lonergan offers here is not a relativistic shift of priorities, but a true engagement with the other, that will produce a truly unique mediation of truth in a world where new ideas and new relationships reframe the hermeneutic of religion. Therefore, the threefold conversion, “the momentous change in the human reality” expands horizons that have their foundation first in the mediated truth of God’s presence in the world and the history of the interpretation of this relationship.

Now if one desires foundations to be conceived in the simple manner, then the only sufficient foundations will be some variation or other of the following style: One must believe and accept whatever the bible or the true church or both believe and accept. But X is the bible or the true church or both. Therefore, one must believe and accept whatever X believes and accepts. Moreover, X believes and accepts a, b, c, d. ... Therefore, one must believe and accept a, b, c, d.... On the contrary, if one desires foundations for an ongoing, developing process, one has to move out of the static, deductivist style—which admits no conclusions that are not implicit in premisses—and into the methodical style—which aims at decreasing darkness and increasing light and keeps adding discovery to discovery.²⁵

The task of religion is to overcome decline and promote progress. Both of these

²⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 40-41.

²⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 270.

movements depend upon the degree of authenticity of persons, and so the agent of progress must therefore be authentic in itself. It is noteworthy that this stage of Lonergan's method, *Foundations*, transcends even religion, for it is rooted in the conversion to God, which transforms the theologian to a being-in-love, and grants the ability to encounter the other through an authentic perspective, to understand the experiences of the other, and to develop theological stances which aim at building the progress of the human community.

Foundations gives mobility to theology; that is, it moves theology from a static standpoint which repeats past teachings, histories, and interpretations, to a theology for the present and future of Christian life, for the realm of common sense in which Christians continually find change. *Foundations* makes the difference in whether theology remains a static conclusion or ongoing process, insofar as it is concerned with the authenticity of the Christian message in light of changes and exchanges in horizons for Christians and among differing religions.

Foundations form the perspectives which lead to doctrines. Lonergan notes that dogmatic theology differs from a doctrinal one, because true doctrines are conscious and responsive to historical changes, whereas dogmas are based on a presumption that one's own culture and interpretation are normative, and these teachings may therefore be considered eternal and universal. Dogmatic teachings, while valuable and a part of religious meaning, are sometimes perceived to have no need to yield to the questions that arise from "alternative" perspectives, and may go so far as to dismiss them as "sinful" simply because they fall outside of these norms, without truly evaluating the truth that

may be reflected. The perception and use of dogma in theology depends upon whether one represents the classicist or historicist worldview. Both Dupuis' method and Lonergan's method allow the human experience of God through a religious conversion to inform theology, while the method of the CDF evaluates the knowledge of God gained through personal experience only through the absolute statements of the Church. It seems from this conflict that the CDF would hold that the "truth" of religious conversion must only be validated by the standards set by the authority of the Church.

Lonergan notes that the twentieth century methods for understanding doctrines were more precise than in any other time period. He points out that doctrines can only be understood through careful research and exegesis.

Church doctrines and theological doctrines pertain to different contexts. Church doctrines are the content of the Church's witness to Christ; they express the set of meanings and values that inform individual and collective Christian living. Theological doctrines are part of an academic discipline, concerned to know and understand the Christian tradition and to further its development. As the two contexts are directed to quite distinct ends, so too they are unequal in extent. Theologians raise many questions that are not mentioned in church doctrines.²⁶

Lonergan is aware of the classicist tendencies of Catholic culture in different periods of history: the reliance on Aristotelian science by medieval theologians, and the relationship between theological doctrines and Church doctrines through the Middle Ages. He notes that neither set of doctrines was established with the historical-mindedness more common in today's processes, and that theologians at that time were as reliant on the authority of Church doctrines as Church doctrines were fine-tuned and made precise by the work of

²⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 314.

the theologians. He notes that the sciences within the last four-and-a-half centuries were not received kindly by the Church, for one because the “churchmen” lacked a sense of the changes that occurred that shaped human’s self-consciousness and also the knowledge of the world through expanding sciences and historical methods.

Lonergan does not reject the Church’s early doctrines on the basis that they were not formed by historically-minded people. This is because doctrines are based on the specialties of Dialectic and Foundations, meaning that one chooses the teachings from the converted stance to determine the course of action from the choices presented in Dialectic. Thus, Lonergan may view them as authentic teachings inasmuch as they were based on interpretation of the data from a converted standpoint. How, then, might Lonergan determine what sort of theological method represents an unconverted position? The answer to this question is found in the analysis of what he deems an authentic theology (that is, one that comes out of a converted standpoint) compared to one that is not.

Lonergan agrees that doctrines are valuable for the individual’s faith as well as the shared faith of the community. While Lonergan emphasizes the dynamic nature of theological statements and the need to communicate in a symbolically meaningful way, he notes that there is permanence in doctrinal statements, which are known as dogmas, and they derive their permanence because they are not human, but divine truths, revealing the hidden mysteries of God.²⁷

²⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 319.

Such I believe is the doctrine of Vatican I on the permanence of the meaning of dogmas. It presupposes (1) that there exist mysteries hidden in God that man could not know unless they were revealed, (2) that they have been revealed, and (3) that the Church has infallibly declared the meaning of what has been revealed. These presuppositions also are church doctrines. Their exposition and defence are tasks, not of a methodologist, but of a theologian.²⁸

Although the revealed message is permanent, Lonergan appreciates the historicity of doctrines since revelation, while divine and true, must also be received and interpreted by the believing subjects. Meanings are understood in context, and contexts are always in process. The difference between the historicist appropriation of doctrines and the classicist position is that the classicist position assumed that culture would be permanent and therefore the message received would never be confronted by such a variety of questions. Critical historical perspectives have shown that while the message may be eternal and true, the expression of it may well vary, and *should* if the communication between religions and the human person (or society) is an authentic event.

At the time of the writing of *Method*, Lonergan observed a movement in the Church toward a less classicist mentality, including less insistence on uniformity and greater acceptance of plurality. He recognized that religious expression is as multiform as common sense and that Communications must likewise be pluralistic. Communication of the Gospel must be executed “in the manner that accords with the assimilative powers of that class and culture.”²⁹

²⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 323-4.

²⁹ Lonergan, *Method*, 328.

The real unity of faith rests upon the presence of conversion in those that govern the Church and those who teach on behalf of the Church. Doctrines will remain true when they reveal the word of God, but will only be meaningful and authentically lived in religions when their communication is produced by converted individuals concerned with the reception and response to the truth in the variety of manners in which meaning is mediated.

Doctrines, the Church, and Theologians

Lonergan distinguishes Church doctrines from theological doctrines according to the way each meets its purpose in Christian life and communication. The theologian is not a source of divine revelation and does not offer an alternative to Scripture or even an alternative source of authority which stands against the Church. The authentic theologian will accept revelation, Scripture, and Church doctrines. Still, the theologian has something unique to offer, and is not merely a “parrot with nothing to do but repeat what has already been said.”³⁰ The authenticity of the theologian allows him or her to judge the authenticity of other work, of other theologians, and the communications of the Church. This will bring a unity of authentic perspectives, as it will also reveal those that are unauthentic.³¹ Lonergan emphasizes the role and the autonomy of the theologian, and when the theologian takes responsibility for conducting his or her work from a converted standpoint, it makes “police work superfluous.” Both the Magisterium and theologian

³⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 331.

³¹ Lonergan uses the word “unauthentic” throughout his work. I will use the expression throughout this project to reflect Lonergan’s thought.

share responsibility for the observance and communication of doctrines, and the contribution of each balances the work of the other.

Church officials have the duty to protect the religion on which theologians reflect, but it is up to the theologians themselves to carry the burden of making theological doctrine as much a matter of consensus as any other long-standing academic discipline.³²

Finally, Lonergan distinguishes between eternal truths revealed and preserved through doctrines, but opposes the classicist approach of dogmatic theology. He repudiates the irresponsible presumption of dogmatic theology that there is only one theological expression that is made normative, eternal, and universal, and favors the historically-minded approach that deems the truth of a proposition through its context.

The religious apprehension is through the context of one's own brand of common sense, of one's own evolving culture, of one's undifferentiation or differentiation of consciousness, of one's own unceasing efforts to attain intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. In contrast, the theological apprehension of doctrines is historical and dialectical. It is historical inasmuch as it grasps the many different contexts in which the same doctrine was expressed in different manners. It is dialectical inasmuch as it discerns the difference between positions and counter-positions and seeks to develop the positions and to reverse the counter-positions.³³

Therefore, whatever the doctrines, they are first and foremost always reliant on conversion. Doctrines must be relevant to the context in which they are being communicated and consider the contexts in which they have been developed. Doctrines reveal a truth that will differ in shape and expression as culture changes. In this manner,

³² Lonergan, *Method*, 332.

³³ Lonergan, *Method*, 333.

Lonergan avoids both the relativization of doctrine and the normative and rigid expression of divine revelation of a classicist approach.

From here we will study the Dupuis controversy and its implications for the Church. So we now turn to a closer look at how two functional specialties, Dialectic and Communications, bear specifically on this issue. From this analysis, we will conclude what the nature of this conflict is, and what the conflict itself suggests for ecclesiology. We must address the relationship between the theologian and the Magisterium, with respect to the overall method of theology and the objective of religious communications. We will also explore, finally, the content of this controversy, religious pluralism and the future of the Church.

The Functional Specialty Dialectic as a Tool for Analyzing the Controversy

Dialectic is the fourth functional specialty, following Research, Interpretations, and History. It aims to overcome differences and establish a comprehensive viewpoint.

It seeks out some single base or some single set of related bases from which it can proceed to an understanding of the character, the oppositions, and the relations of the many viewpoints exhibited in conflicting Christian movements, their conflicting histories, and their conflicting interpretations.³⁴

The material of dialectic is conflict, which may be rooted in religious sources, interpretations, theology, or authoritative statements. These differences may lead to contrary horizons that shape doctrines, theology, systems, histories, or policies. In the Dupuis case, we shall see a contrary approach to how a theology of religious pluralism

³⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 129.

ought to be understood doctrinally and how it ought to be communicated through the Christian Church both for Christians and non-Christian religions.

Some differences may be overcome by recognizing different perspectives, but those which emerge from fundamentally different cognitional theories, ethical stances, or religious outlooks may only be overcome by religious, moral, or intellectual conversion. “The function of dialectic will be to bring such conflicts to light, and to provide a technique that objectifies subjective differences and promotes conversion.”³⁵ The task of this section is to identify what sort of difference lies at the heart of the Dupuis-CDF dispute, and what sort of conversion, if any, is needed in order to move forward.

The first step to discerning conflict and its sources is to determine the horizon within which each position is grounded. Horizons mark the boundary lines of our knowledge; they delineate what we know, and what knowledge we share with others. While they are the source of further knowledge, they may also define the limits of and capacity for our knowledge.³⁶ The remedy to conflicts which arise out of differences in horizons comes only through conversion, which, as previously defined, results in a change of horizons, and the consequent ability to engage authentically with other worldviews and perspectives.

Lonergan identifies three different types of conflicts: complementary, genetic, or dialectical. Complementary differences in horizons indicate a set of different perspectives which may correspond to one’s own field of vision, but are not identical to

³⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 235.

³⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 235-7.

it. Though different perspectives may reflect objectives, those with complementary differences recognize that their differences may contribute to the greater outcome. While one viewpoint is particular and different, it may not necessarily contradict the others. There may be elements that overlap between two horizons. Where they differ, they complement the views of the other. The outcome reveals the complexity of a truth, where not one contributor may be able to offer the only or most complete set of data or analysis. An example would be how a psychologist may contribute one perspective to a problem, while a neurobiologist could offer another; both pieces aid in the overall solution, though their methods and even their conclusions differed.

Genetic differences reveal a common origin of two viewpoints but presuppose different stages of development. Each stage of development preserves some part of the origin, while in some part the perspective (or doctrine) is transformed. Because the stages are successive, there are no simultaneous stages. This is evident in some scientific theories, which begin with a commonly-accepted principle, but develop different hypotheses based on different phases of the development of the original discovery. The two positions are bound to be more divergent, because they have “branched off” from a common origin, though they may be able to trace their differences to a particular stage of the theory’s development.

Dialectical differences are quite different. Where one finds something true, the other finds it false. There are drastic differences in horizon which are believed to be contrary, wrong, imagined, or unfaithful.

For the other’s horizon, at least in part, is attributed to wishful thinking, to an

acceptance of myth, to ignorance or fallacy, to blindness or illusion, to backwardness or immaturity, to infidelity, to bad will, to a refusal of God's grace.³⁷

Therefore, any sort of change that results in shifting the view or accepting another's perspective must first follow conversion.

Conversion may proceed from a recognition of one's own stubbornness or rigidity of viewpoint, and, as Lonergan says, one may have to do an "about face" that makes way for a new sequence of thought and action.³⁸ Intellectual conversion comes from the knowledge that comes out of the world mediated by meaning compared to that of the world of immediacy. This process involves knowing what one is doing when one is knowing. It is knowing the difference between knowing and looking. It means being liberated from bias and rigidly-held myths. Intellectual conversion leads to "ever further clarifications and developments."³⁹ Conversion begins with one's own horizon and the subsequent change in that horizon. One's horizon may shift only if one encounters the world as mediated by meaning. Knowing what is real and what is myth comes from a differentiated consciousness, a consciousness of knowing what is real through experiencing, understanding, judging, and believing. Human knowing is a process of self-transcendence which extends beyond interpreting the world through simply seeing what is. Robert Doran describes how knowing is transformed through intellectual

³⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 236.

³⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 237

³⁹ Lonergan, *Method*, 240.

conversion.

The usual meaning of ‘intellectual conversion’ for Lonergan is this philosophic meaning, where one says ‘I am a knower,’ where by knowing one means the composite structure of experience, understanding, and judgment, where what is known is being, and where objectivity is a matter, not of taking a good look at the already out there now, but of raising and answering the relevant questions. In this sense, as Lonergan states in *Method in Theology*, objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity.⁴⁰

Such an approach to knowing allows one to develop one’s horizons, and it begins by accepting questions and being willing to accept authentic and objective answers.

Moral conversion involves the individual’s movement toward his or her own authenticity. As she or he broadens knowledge and responds to values, the apprehension of the good arises out of not only deciding but acting. Moral conversion is above all a free act that responds to one’s knowledge, and is a result of a differentiated consciousness. It is an ongoing process of learning and acting, to keep actively moving toward progress and avoiding decline. Moral conversion is a constant process of evaluating values and acting intentionally, to continue learning from others and developing one’s own knowledge of reality in all situations.⁴¹

Religious conversion is a state of “other-worldly falling in love...of God’s love flooding our hearts.”⁴² Rather than a deliberate act, it is a result of transcendent awareness and revealed in consciousness, in “a fated acceptance of a vocation to

⁴⁰ Doran, “What Does Bernard Lonergan Mean by ‘Conversion’?” *Lectures*.

⁴¹ Lonergan, *Method*, 240.

⁴² Lonergan, *Method*, 241.

holiness.”⁴³ It results in such a transformation that all other conversion is put in light of this new value of reality. The pursuit of the good is placed in light of a “cosmic context and purpose” and one’s thought and action is intended toward building progress and undoing decline. It is a complete transformation of value systems, one that is in a response to the process of transcendence, a new apprehension of reality and a new pursuit of exigencies of consciousness. It is a new and richer context which frames an individual’s horizon and guards against bias, because the consciousness of truth and pursuit of truth secures one enough to pursue knowledge and open new possibilities without fear, and with the strength given through a refined basis for values and action. The three types of conversion are related and interdependent, though not absolutely dependent on each other. One may be converted morally but not religiously or intellectually. Each mutually supports the ongoing conversion of the other types. This newfound state mediates meaning in a way that allows one to evaluate experience, to judge values, and therefore to decide and act in response to the drive towards authenticity.

Though religious conversion sublates moral, and moral conversion sublates intellectual, one is not to infer that intellectual comes first and then moral and finally religious. On the contrary, from a causal viewpoint, one would say that first there is God’s gift of his love. Next, the eye of this love reveals values in their splendor, while the strength of this love brings about their realization, and that is moral conversion. Finally, among the values discerned by the eye of love is the value of believing the truths taught by the religious tradition, and in such tradition and belief are the seeds of intellectual conversion. For the word, spoken and heard, proceeds from and penetrates to all four levels of intentional consciousness. Its content is not just a content of experience but a content of

⁴³ Lonergan, *Method*, 241.

experience and understanding and judging and deciding. The analogy of sight yields the cognitional myth. But fidelity to the word engages the whole man.⁴⁴ We have been speaking of conversion, so we must also address its opposite:

breakdown. Breakdown results with the collapse of values, of value judgments that are not based on the cognitional structure of self-transcendence, and so judgments and beliefs become influenced by things outside of intellectual, moral, and religious beliefs.

Distortions become part of the culture, and they are often remedied by “elimination, mutilation, and [more] distortion.”⁴⁵ Such dissolution of values and societies may occur among different group and different times. Beyond dissolution is disunity.

The functional specialty Dialectic is necessary when major differences in horizon create conflicting perspectives found in History and Interpretation, which only conversion can overcome. For only a conversion will offer a change in horizon that leads to a new understanding of self, the self’s perspectives, and the self as it encounters another. The only remedy for differences in horizons is conversion that is either religious, intellectual, or moral, or all three.

The Issues and Their Roots

I have proposed that this controversy presents not only the theological issue of religious pluralism, but also the conflict that has surfaced between the discipline of theology as Lonergan understands it, and the theological method and communication of the CDF. I propose that the first is a genetic difference, and the second is a dialectical

⁴⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 241.

⁴⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 241.

difference which will require a conversion and a shift of horizon. This project is meant to illustrate the way in which the conflict over Dupuis' book impacts the Church and its participation in our global society. The problem is more than simply the theology of religious pluralism, but the manner in which the authorities in the Church prohibits progress in Christian theology which could strengthen the Church's service to the people of the world and thereby enhance its presence as the symbol and sacrament of God. I will explain this claim further in the following sections.

Two Issues, Two Kinds of Difference

To be true to Lonergan's theological method, we may not officially "begin" the analysis of the controversy with Dialectic, even though the conflict between the CDF and Dupuis is the focus of this study. Not only are the specializations interdependent and mutually informative, this specialization follows three others, and directly impacts the next four. Therefore, we must take all eight specializations into consideration when analyzing this controversy. Rather than exhaustively explaining and applying each functional specialty to this controversy, I may instead summarize a few points that may emerge through the earlier specializations, but give special emphasis to Dialectics and Communication. For now, let me summarize the conflict on the theology of inclusive pluralism. Both the CDF and Dupuis agree that the possibility of salvation must exist for all. The CDF agrees that while there is good and truth found in non-Christian religions, we must also affirm the necessity of baptism for salvation, and therefore, the salvation of those outside the Church is a mystery.

Dupuis developed an extensive construction of a theology of inclusive pluralism,

using a method that extensively reviewed the history of Christian theology over two centuries. He carefully explored the development of the theologies and exegeses of numerous Christian scholars, with consideration of the contextual influence on their interpretations. The theological positions in *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* are actually quite congruent with many of the CDF's statements in the Notification, most likely because Dupuis used a long history of accepted doctrinal positions to develop his theology. While the ecclesial statements accept it as a mystery, "known only to God," that the "others" are saved, in spite of Biblical references that suggest the necessity of baptism, Dupuis aims to give greater explanation of the Christian economy of salvation. Dupuis' work simply reflects the job of the theologian: to interpret the mystery of God in order to understand one's faith. Dupuis clarified the paradoxical language, not the core of Christian belief, in order to express this belief more adequately for our current global and pluralistic context. What the Church documents leave to faith and mystery, Dupuis seeks to better understand, through faith.

I suggest that had the CDF approached the topic with the same objective as Dupuis, this research might have uncovered data that would lend itself to greater harmony between the two positions and the CDF's. I propose that there is a genetic difference because the two sides essentially agree on the outcome: there is a possibility of salvation for non-Christians. Much of what they say overlaps, in fact, and both offer a positive view of the fundamental questions of the salvation of non-Christians and the Church's disposition toward them. The point of divergence is whether, and how, theology may articulate the salvation of all within the framework of Christian belief that

has developed since the revelation of Christ, the subsequent interpretation of that event, and the doctrines that emerged from it. The two methods produce a genetic difference and point to an outcome that will determine the direction of the religions in the future.

Genetic Differences in the Theologies of Dupuis and the CDF

Genetic differences presume a difference in horizon that is not in complete opposition to another horizon. It suggests that the horizons have a common origin but has diverged at some point in some stages of its development. Lonergan describes a genetic difference as existing between different viewpoints arising from different stages in a developmental process that is one part of a shared history. This is evident in the sources used by both positions. As shown in chapter three, Dupuis used sources dating to the apostolic interpretation of Christ's mission and various theologians and Church documentation through the entire history of Catholicism, whereas the CDF relies not on the work of theologians, but on a few selections from some ecclesial documents (also used by Dupuis) to bolster its position.

Horizons may differ genetically. They are related as successive stages in some process of development. Each later stage presupposes earlier stages, partly to include them, and partly to transform them. Precisely because the stages are earlier and later, no two are simultaneous. They are parts, not of a single communal world, but of a single biography or of a single history.⁴⁶

The differences in the theologies seem to reflect this process of successive stages, inclusion of earlier developments, and their transformations. The occasional contradictory ideas found within the history of Church doctrines form the basis of Dupuis' attempt to integrate these divergent developments into a more coherent theology.

⁴⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 236.

Conversely, the CDF seems to prefer preserving the continuity of a traditional theological teaching to risking an admission of an incorrect position that might result from a transformed theology or expression and teachings of the Church on the problem of religions and necessity of baptism. This position does not suggest that there is overall disagreement; that is, neither would admit that there is a “problem” of plurality at all. The difference comes down to the use of theology to explain something that is more easily left to non-explanation. This does not point to a conflicting theology of religions as much as it points to a conflict in the objectives and methods between Dupuis and the CDF.

The horizons of both the CDF and of Dupuis are similar and even overlapping, though not wholly identical. Both have a position of favor and goodwill and love toward all of God’s people. Both hold that in some way all are sharers in God’s kingdom and are oriented toward the same truth. Their differences do not lie in the conclusions about the status of the other but in the degree of explanation of the mystery of salvation. Their differences are rooted in their theological methods and the way in which they appropriate their methods toward the future of the Catholic Church and its expression of inclusion of non-Christians.

The method of the CDF compared to that of Dupuis also leads to some other apparent conflicts, particularly in the theologies of Christ and the Church. The CDF suggests that Dupuis’ Christology and Ecclesiology do not reflect the Church’s teaching, and so we have to ask if these particular theologies are genetic or dialectical differences as well. From the statement of the CDF, it would seem that Dupuis’ positions are in

dialectical opposition to the Catholic teaching, but Dupuis seems to suggest that the differences are not as the CDF perceives. Chapter three has shown how Dupuis and others remarked that the conflict arose out of apparent misinterpretation and may have been avoided with improved dialogue and communication. Their differences on these issues point to serious implications for the relationship between the Magisterium and theology concerning the methods that are most appropriate for today's world. One may wonder if there is any room for revised language of theology or development of theology, or if theology is merely to repeat only those expressions that meet the approval of the magisterial leadership.

For a better overview of this dispute and the many areas of divergence between the CDF and Dupuis, we must appeal to the other functional specialties. We cannot determine the nature of a conflict without looking at the origin of the difference. We must look at the way in which each theology approaches the history and interpretations as it develops its conclusions (or its doctrines), and the possibility of bias in the theologian(s). Then we must ask, do the differences reflect successive stages of development, or do they represent horizons which are in opposition to one another?

Lonergan's specialties correspond to the four levels of conscious and intentional operations. As he says, "there are four levels and so four proper ends. It follows that the very structure of human inquiry results in four functional specialties."⁴⁷ Clearly there is a difference in the methods used in the two theologies, in Research, Interpretation and in History. Dupuis' approach is more consonant with Lonergan's method than the CDF's.

⁴⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 134.

It seems that while Dupuis utilized a variety of sources and viewpoints to arrive at his transformation of the understanding of the theology of pluralism, the CDF's research relies on a very limited scope of resources, a particular interpretation (that of the Church's own ambiguous position), and a limited review of history (this is very evident in *Dominus Jesus*). In terms of Lonergan's method, Dupuis' research considered various, even conflicting, viewpoints through the course of Christian history, and subsequently examined the interpretations. Dupuis explored the history of the teachings of theologians and the Catholic Church's official positions, and, in light of all of this data, made a judgment about all of the data presented to him. This judgment, in terms of Lonergan's method, is the critical component of this analysis. The judgment corresponds to the act of allowing one to transcend the self, to transcend the data, and allow one's knowledge of God and God's love to inform the value one places on the data. Dupuis' method begins, in fact, with this very experience of God's love and his encounters with people around the world who meet God in their own religious traditions and expression. His own horizon was in fact shaped by his encounter with others, all of whom were responding in their own religious traditions to the same Word of God offered to them. His method is a response to the expression of God's word and God's love in people's everyday experiences, where God's love is made real in at the level of common sense. His research began as a result of his conversion. This is his basis for the theology of pluralism, which gave justification for his inductive method. It also reflects Dupuis' own conversion as a Catholic theologian. Like Lonergan's method, which begins the mediated phase of theology following conversion, Dupuis' method of theology begins

with the human response to God. Like Lonergan's method, Dupuis' method takes place at different levels – the level of experience, the level of the Word, and the context and experience in an engagement with the Word that makes theology. Lonergan similarly understands that the level of transcendence, the place where God's love determines the value and the judgment, includes the realm of common sense, and indeed all the levels of meaning. For both Dupuis and Lonergan, the Word of God, in whatever way we know it, must meet the other areas in which human beings encounter and make sense of the world. Dupuis' experiences with the religions led him to this notion, and so he understood that theology must reflect this encounter between divine and human, and that Christian theology, because it has the fullness of truth through Jesus Christ, must be able to articulate this.

The bias reflected in the CDF's method reveals the sort of scotosis which perpetuates rigid standpoints and halts progress. It does not result from the Church's (relatively recent) conclusion on the acceptance of non-Christians, but on the Magisterium's "certitude" and the risk involved with allowing theology to be transformed by new data and insights in order to become more meaningful for culture. This resistance to accommodating a synthesis of the Church's own teaching in order to describe and appropriate what has been relegated to the realm of mystery is the result of bias, and can only be overcome with conversion.

Difference in the Development of Theology and the Stance of the CDF: Dialectical

While the CDF and Dupuis reached conclusions that are not entirely opposing, the significant difference, and the heart of the problem, is a dialectical difference in the

appropriation of theology itself. Having determined that the positions of the CDF and of Dupuis are genetic differences that likely have the possibility of finding more agreement with the uncovering of data and interpreting that data without bias, we now turn to the real issue preventing the further development of theologies of pluralism, which is the responsibility of the Magisterium in its task of considering theological progress and henceforth developing its doctrines and communicating them according to an authentic interpretation of Christianity in this age.

Dialectic aims to achieve a comprehensive perspective and determine the nature of differences.

By dialectic, then, is understood a generalized apologetic...aiming ultimately at a comprehensive viewpoint, and proceeding towards that goal by acknowledging differences, seeking their grounds real and apparent, and eliminating superfluous oppositions.⁴⁸

Because the difference in the theology could be overcome if the CDF had accommodated the research and historical data that Dupuis had, we can determine that the real ground of difference lies in something other than religious pluralism, but in resistance to assimilate new theological interpretations into its ambiguous doctrines.

This sort of dialectical difference is the result of bias. Bias is the effect of the obstruction to authenticity, an unwillingness to yield to a transcendent approach to theology. It is obscured from the truth because of its own scotoma. "It is an unconscious process. It arises, not in conscious acts, but in the censorship that governs the emergence

⁴⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 130.

of psychic contents.”⁴⁹ Bias prevents a shift in horizon and anchors itself in self-assurance that its own horizon defines the limits normatively.

This dialectical difference in this controversy reveals the method of theology as a process of self-transcendence. The first four functional specialties correspond to the cognitional processes that lead to an authentic, converted standpoint, and so they risk transforming an old perspective into a new one. This is where the Magisterium’s need for conversion becomes apparent. Is the CDF willing to risk incorporating new data, new interpretations, new syntheses of history in order to move forward in its theology of non-Christian religions, or will it demand a static position in order to keep its historical positions from being interpreted as contradictory or ambiguous?

Research, then, interpretation, history, and dialectic reveal the religious situation. They mediate an encounter with persons witnessing to Christ. They challenge to a decision: in what manner or measure am I to carry to the burden of continuity or to risk the initiative of change? That decision, however, is primarily not a theological but a religious event; it pertains to the prior more spontaneous level on which theology reflects and which it illuminates and objectifies...⁵⁰

The mediation of the Word of God must be authentically understood in the Church’s process of theology. But in order to effectively mediate this, it *must* take an honest inventory of the data. It must first pay attention to the different ways that God has been manifest in the world, in not only the revelation of Jesus, but in the hearts, minds, and activities of peoples and societies and in religions that have also mediated the Word of

⁴⁹ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding, Volume 3* (Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan), ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 191-2.

⁵⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 135.

God and the response to the Holy Spirit. It must be intelligent in developing its interpretations of these experiences, as Dupuis was in attending to the experiences of people and ascertaining that the Word does meet humankind in its everyday experiences. It must be reasonable in deciding what this mediated Word of God means in its different manifestations in the human conscience and in the actions of religious people, and it must be responsible in the way it carries this message forth in its own teachings and leadership of Christian faithful.

Dialectical differences refer to the boundaries and limits of horizon. A difference is dialectical if there is little real inclusion of the other, any real acknowledgement of a truth found in another's claim beyond a simple recognition of it. Boundaries define the limits of one's beliefs. Transcendental method allows one to engage other authentic horizons in order that they may shape one's own. The difference between an unauthentic position and an authentic one is the ability to truly engage the other, to not stand in rigid determination of one's own goals, but to respond to the truth that is found in another's horizon and let it expand one's own understanding of the truth. This can only occur through a process of conversion, whereby one's free response to God releases one from the fear of change when the change opens up a greater capacity for the truth.

Analysis of the CDF's method suggests a need for conversion. The bias of the Magisterium in its resistance to a theology of pluralism may be overcome with either religious, moral, or intellectual conversion, or all three. I suggest that the differences in the Dupuis case could be overcome with an intellectual conversion of the Church's authority, which would allow for transcendental precepts to give a judgment and value

that frees the Church to work towards expressing theology that makes a Christian theology of pluralism meaningful within the Catholic faith. Only conversion can establish the foundations of authentic religion. Foundations leads to Doctrines and Systematics and finally Communications. A religion that is unauthentic will communicate its doctrinal meanings in symbols that carry no authentic meaning for a culture or its people and will fail to mediate meaning in a way that facilitates authentic belief and transformation of the human community.

The Significance of the Functional Specialty Communications for this Controversy

The functional specialty Communications is the last of Lonergan's functional specialties. It completes the mediated phase of theology, following from the level of transcendence to the level of common sense. Just as an individual may be self-appropriated, Communications reflects the appropriation of a self-differentiated theology. Communications is the specialty of relating theology to religious expression, and it expresses the authenticity of the method and thus of the religion.

It is also where authentic religious expression comes into dialogue with society and all of the other mediations of meaning in society, such as science, politics, institutions. The basic purpose of these social structures is the building up of communities. Religious communication has a special role, in conjunction with the other areas of meaning, to participate in the building of progress of human community. It must rely on the previous functional specialties to bear its fruit and to delineate between what is authentic and unauthentic in society. Its task is to reduce decline through the constructive function of communicating religious value and reveal the falseness of

misleading ideologies and alienation that are reinforced by interdependent social structures. Thus, the Church's hierarchy must collaborate with other spheres of society, from within culture, and not superimposed upon it, to promote a structure built on the value of the common good. Other methods of acquiring knowledge may function in a parallel pattern of the specialties as Lonergan's method does, in order to sort through conflicting values, histories, interpretations, and data. The Church has a particular role in communicating religious value to the community, and further, to implement it for the good of the Christian community, society in general, and with the other religious traditions in order to fulfill the commission to build the kingdom of God on Earth, and to respond to the Word, the Spirit, in history.

This will only be done on a global scale, that is, beyond the insulation of the Catholic Church, when the Magisterium distances itself from a classicist perspective and adopts a historical consciousness. Though it was mentioned earlier, it is worth noting again with regard to this specialty, that for religion to promote progress and authentically present the Christian faith, it must recognize that its own view of culture is not normative, and that authentic religious communication is a result of the dynamism of the relationships that mediate religious meaning. Therefore, it proclaims the truth of God which is eternal and unchanging for a world that has a *constantly* changing set of meaning and symbols. Community is the basis of society, and the Church as a community has something unique to offer: the value that it places on other data and interpretations. Therefore, the Church has a very distinct role in facilitating the conversion of society, the movement of society to a level of transcendence that can take

the meaning from the level of common sense to one that is responsive to the love of God. Religious meaning and the communicative function of the Church can positively transform a culture that is not only attentive, reasonable, intelligent, but is also responsible because its action is derived from meaning given through love and which has collectively become a being-in-love. This is not culture-specific, or religion-specific, because the word of God and the love of God are given nonexclusively. The Church, then, “results from the outer communication of Christ’s message and from the inner gift of God’s love.”⁵¹

The Church does not exist for itself or only for its own members. An ever outgoing process, it exists for the world in response to a message that has been given to all of humankind. Insofar as communicating the truth is its primordial task, the Church must itself be humble and willing to surrender itself to the truth of God, but this will only occur when the authority of the Catholic Church transcends its self-centeredness to allow the love of God to shape its own horizon and objectify its own knowledge and receive the truth; in other words, the consciousness of the Catholic Church must itself be differentiated in order to be authentic. In spite of its long history and its authoritative status on spiritual matters, the Church’s job is still primarily to continue to interpret and communicate the meaning of the Christ-event and build the kingdom of God. Of course, this means that the Church is to cultivate a society where individuals live for one another and work for the good of all. The Church enhances this project by creating structures that

⁵¹ Lonergan, *Method*, 361.

serve the well-being of human existence, and thus aid their efforts toward authenticity. The Church is not the originator of the message, but it is the messenger, and thus its primary task is to communicate this message. Determining what is to be communicated is the function of the first seven functional specialties. The eighth, therefore, depends on the first seven, and the first seven fall short of their purpose without the eighth. The effectiveness of the functional specialties is relative to the extent that the meaningfulness of the Word of God is brought into society and transforms it.

Insofar as the Church mediates the authentic message of religion and facilitates the conversion of society through its aid in the self-transcendence and self-differentiation of cultural consciousness, Lonergan describes the Church predominantly in terms of “process”: it is a fully self-constituting process, a structured process, an out-going process, a redemptive process while simultaneously a constructive process. This multifold process of the Church suggests that it does not remain insular but rather works within societal institutions and cultural meanings to transform within the culture the self-consciousness of the culture, to assist the culture in its own self-appropriation. In this way, then, the Church is not an imposing process, but an integral process towards construction of the good and a dismantling of decline. If ideology and alienation constitute the sin that casts humankind into its cycle of destruction, then the value of love, injected into human history in the person of Jesus and the ongoing abidance of the Holy Spirit, allows the Church in a unique way to offer an alternative to the undoing of society by offering the opportunity for people to respond from within their own situations and meanings, to this universal experience, the universal *option*, to become authentic.

What all of this suggests is that the participation of the Church in creating progress and reducing decline is an event of collaboration with everything that constitutes the human structures of meaning, i.e., culture, science, religion, art. Thus, religious values must be in dialogue with those other avenues that tell us what it means to be human and participate in the world: science, anthropology, psychology, business, educational institutions, etc. It must also be humble enough to recognize that community is equally built up by other religions.

The Christian message is to be communicated to all nations. Such communication presupposes that preachers and teachers enlarge their horizons to include an accurate and intimate understanding of the culture and the language of the people they address. They must grasp the virtual resources of that culture and that language, and they must use those virtual resources creatively so that the Christian message becomes, not disruptive of the culture, not an alien patch superimposed upon it, but a line of development within the culture.⁵²

Toward this end, the Church must, first, recognize different horizons and second, engage them authentically. The Church as community itself must always be renewed, meaning that it may never rely on its classicist tendency toward cultural normativeness. For the Church to be renewed it must always be self-aware of its horizon and the horizons which it will meet as it fulfills its communicative function. In turn, its own horizon must be malleable, for a vertical shift is a response to God through the authenticity of another. It must embrace the resources within the societies, the institutions, the cultures, in order to build the community rather than disrupt the good that is already at work. What the Church will find, when it seeks to operate collaboratively, is that there is already

⁵² Lonergan, *Method*, 362.

agreement on the constitutive and effective meaning of fellowship and service, but what is yet to be agreed upon is developed intellectually.

Such agreement, however, needs expression and, while we await common cognitive agreement, the possible expression is collaboration in fulfilling the redemptive and constructive roles of the Christian Church in human society.⁵³ Lonergan's final specialization is explicitly and intentionally ecumenical. He

recognizes the differences occurring in the time of his writing and declares the openness to use the method toward building unity, at least among the Christian religions. Further, he opens the subject of building a broader unity among inter-religious collaboration, noting that the Christian message is a specific response to the person of Christ as the interaction of God's love and word in history, but is not exclusive of the response to the love extended to all of humanity through Christ's person and the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit. He says that all of the world religions have the common features that illustrate their already-present religious conversion, that is, of the being-in-love with God.

[T]here is a transcendent reality; that he is immanent in human hearts; that he [*sic*] is supreme beauty, truth, righteousness, goodness; that he is love, mercy, compassion; that the way to him is repentance, self-denial, prayer; that the way is love of one's neighbor, even of one's enemies; that the way is love of God, so that bliss is conceived as knowledge of God, union with him, or dissolution into him.⁵⁴

It is very evident that Lonergan does not question the religious value in other traditions, which also suggests the inter-religious nature of the theological method itself, particularly of the final functional specialization. He acknowledges that the true goal of religious

⁵³ Lonergan, *Method*, 368.

⁵⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 109.

communication is to build community that furthers progress in society and reduces decline, which aims at the conversion of people and collectively, societies. Such transformation begins with the mediated message of religious value, then this would allow for a shared goal among all religions that facilitate self-transcendence and response in action to the love of God. As Lonergan says, the content of this message differs among the particular occasions and interpretations of the historical mediation of the God's self-disclosure, but this does not preclude the joint activity of building what Christians label the kingdom of God. Indeed, Lonergan would suggest that if there are obstructions to this great task, it is not due to the differences among the cognitive meaning of religions, but rather the lack of conversion of people, communities, and even of religious institutions themselves.

Analysis of the Controversy in Terms of Lonergan's Method

This difference in the theologies of the CDF and Dupuis would be a genetic difference had the CDF allowed Dupuis to continue the conversation and the theological process to unfold among theologians, Christians, and non-Christians. What has been thwarted was any possibility for an authentic theological advancement or the unfurling of deepening relationships among Christians and non-Christians through a unifying theology.

Rather than engaging Dupuis' theology, the CDF remained fixed in its horizon, closed off to alternative perspectives or expansion of its own theology in favor of its own dogmatism, regardless of the inconclusiveness of the theology of salvation of non-Christians and the necessity of the sacrament of baptism. Its stubborn theological stance

and authoritarian communication exhibit all the signs of a classicist mentality. The actions of the CDF in response to Dupuis signal the dangerous effect of dramatic bias, the scotosis marked by rigidly held positions, a blindness “that the bias brings about by excluding the relevant further questions.”⁵⁵ Such a rejection of the process of theology and its progressive results naturally, and in this case, intentionally, limit the horizon and preclude the outcome.

Robert Doran, S.J., explains conversion as a process of changing from something to something else. Since conversion is the effect of the fulfillment of God’s love, the starting point may be considered a state of radical lovelessness. Since the goal is self-transcendence, the starting point may be considered self-absorption. In each of the three forms of conversion, the transformation takes effect with the love of God and a change in horizon. In the case of intellectual conversion, the effect of radical lovelessness is the obstruction of one’s horizon to the extent that one’s knowledge will not expand simply because one will not welcome its possibility.

Radical lovelessness also distorts one’s cognitional performance, in that it closes or narrows the horizon, the range of one’s interests and concerns, the range of what one will even ask questions about in the first place. Intellectual conversion in its basic form will open that horizon of questions. It will transform one’s cognitional life so that questions regarding meaning and truth are pursued for their own sake, and not for utilitarian and narrowly pragmatic purposes.⁵⁶

Even though the CDF arrives at its teachings out its sense of fidelity to its mission (though its definition of mission may differ from Dupuis’), in so doing, it has failed to

⁵⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 191.

⁵⁶ Doran, “What Does Bernard Lonergan Mean by ‘Conversion’?” *Lectures*.

redefine its mission in light of the changing global culture, of the shared expression and yearning for the divine among the people of different faiths. As the world's religions seek deeper unity, and Christian theologians seek to define unity theologically, the Magisterium has remained repetitious of its own teachings, neglecting the advancements of theologians such as Dupuis who understands revelation in context towards building on the theology established through *Nostra aetate* itself. In sum, this conflict points to the urgent need for Church authorities' intellectual conversion, an "about face" regarding its ambiguous theological conclusions on the matter of salvation of the unbaptized.

The conflict shows the differences in orientation of research, contrary interpretations, contrary horizons, and contrary systems. Whereas Dupuis "transformed" the theology of religions in the terms of Christian salvation and God's participation in history, as has been done in earlier periods of theology which have informed our doctrines, the CDF remained fixed. While Dupuis interpreted the research, used the breadth of historical analyses, relied on the theologies and doctrines of the past, the CDF relied only on selected excerpts of its own doctrinal statements. Where Dupuis reached a converted stance by the standards of Lonergan's theological method, through his experiences and judgments of the human relationship with God regardless of religious classification, and proceeded to evaluate theology of religions and Christian salvation in reference to Scripture and tradition to transform theology into a new language of "common sense," the CDF relied on its presumed control of the divine truth in order to use the term "mystery" to cover the gaps in understanding the Christian doctrine of salvation.

The disparity in their conclusions demonstrates the difference that results from similar histories and similar data, and therefore suggests a genetic theological difference. However, theology does not stop with interpretation, but must move into the mediated phase in order to effectively communicate the Christian message and convert cultures. And this is where the interdependence of the functional specialties reveals the dialectical difference between the theologian and the Magisterium.

This process demonstrates the interdependence of the functional specializations because conflict analysis (Dialectic), when integrated into the theological process, depends not just on the mediating phase of theology through History, Research, or Interpretation, but also on the mediated phase of theological method, in Doctrines, Systematics, and Communication. The effect of an unconverted, unauthentic approach to theology through the communication of religious belief by the Church's leadership will be an unauthentic religious experience among the faithful or a rejection of the religion by those who recognize its unauthenticity.

Thus we must face these questions: Do those who exercise and serve the teaching authority in the Church need conversion? How would the conversion of the CDF in this case, a change in horizon, have yielded a different trajectory for the Christian community and its relationship with other faiths as participants in the one and same kingdom of God?

At the time of writing *Method in Theology*, when the Church was adapting to the vision of Vatican II, Lonergan noted that Christianity in that period did not insist on uniformity in the same way as it once had. There is more pluralism in expression, which is needed for a church that must have a differentiated consciousness in order to

effectively communicate in a world that is recognizably diverse and pluralistic. A differentiated consciousness leads to a remodeling of common sense, and authentic theology must speak to the multiform “brands” of common sense that exist in the world, even among Christians. One may wonder if Lonergan would see the Church at this present time in the same way, with less insistence on uniformity, or if he would see this event as representing a different mentality in the Church.

I believe that Lonergan would suggest that this conflict calls for the conversion of the teaching authority of the Catholic Church that must result in the “radical clarification” and elimination of “exceedingly stubborn and misleading myth.”⁵⁷ It must come from a knowledge of truth that is the result of “the fated acceptance of a vocation to holiness,”⁵⁸ of the flooding of the heart with the love of God, the grace which transforms one not only in personal relationship, but through an epistemological shift in the Magisterium’s interpretation of the history of the revelation of God. The converted Magisterium, along with the theologian, has the responsibility, if it wishes for an authentic conversion of humanity to God, to mediate this meaning in a way that demonstrates it is critically realistic about the situation of the Word in the world today. As Robert Doran says,

The term ‘intellectual conversion’ has several meanings. Lonergan’s usual meaning has to do with an explicit philosophical position, but there are also a couple of forms of intellectual conversion that are realized when I judge and decide that I cannot continue to run away from asking questions, because it is only by raising and answering questions that I will arrive at truth. Even in its philosophic form, intellectual conversion is not the firm and quiet possession of a

⁵⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 238.

⁵⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 241.

correct philosophy, but the effort to reach cognitive integrity in one's intellectual positions.⁵⁹

It is clear that regarding the theology of religions or the development of an inclusive pluralism, the CDF, unlike Dupuis, repudiates raising and answering "new" questions. In contrast to Dupuis, the CDF seems to find that because the answers have been given through the history of ecclesiastical teachings, there is no need for further questions, and there are no further answers to be gained. It seems for the CDF, the matter is closed, and any questions that may arise are moot points.

What we must explore is what constitutes a change of horizon for the Church's teaching authority and how such a change would impact the future of this topic of religious inclusion, and of theology and Christianity in general. Insofar as any movement one way or the other can lead to either progress or decline, we can try to determine the variety of consequences of the CDF's possible different responses to Dupuis' work in order to determine the better course of action, in terms of whether it may lead to either the progress or the decline of the Catholic Church.

Action transforms the existing situation to give rise to further insights, better policies, more effective courses of action. It follows that if insight occurs, it keeps recurring; and at each recurrence knowledge develops, action increases its scope, and situations improve.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Doran, "What Does Bernard Lonergan Mean by 'Conversion'?" *Lectures*.

⁶⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, xv.

Lonergan notes that what is practical is intelligent, and that insight leads to action that yields recurring progress. Conversely, oversight, the opposite of insight, leads to cumulative decline.

For the flight from understanding blocks the insights that concrete situations demand. There follow unintelligent policies and inept courses of action. The situation deteriorates to demand still further insights, and as they are blocked, policies become more unintelligent and action more inept. What is worse, the deteriorating situation seems to provide the uncritical, biased mind with factual evidence in which the bias is claimed to be verified.⁶¹

We may assume that both the CDF and Dupuis would argue that their own method would yield the better and more truthful (or at least *towards* more truthful) and authentic results. Both would argue that theirs is the converted standpoint and that the results would yield progress for Christianity. Lonergan's method demonstrates that true progress reflects the conversion of people toward unity in response and conversion to God. Yet it also maintains that doctrines reflect eternal truths, and further, that there is a distinction between Church doctrines and theological doctrines. So which course of action best illustrates what Lonergan would deem a converted stance, or exhibit a methodology that is transcendental, providing an unbiased foundation that yields authentic religious doctrines and communication? Is it fair to say that a re-articulation of traditional Church language in light of new data about the human situation, as well as new information about the historical formulation of the current doctrines, would be such a refusal of divine truth that it would relativize and distort what is true about Christianity, as is the position of the CDF on Dupuis' method? Or, could it possibly be that a re-articulation of Church

⁶¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, xv.

doctrines in light of the new data and an uncovering of previous methods to develop different theological language could, indeed, deepen the Christian message, unveil a new meaning that is not only true for our day, but may have been true all the while? Could such a method reveal deeper truths about the divine participation in human history, and lend new meaning on the human situation? Neither the CDF, Dupuis, nor Lonergan wishes to see the truth of the Christian message evaporate in favor of a secular interpretation of the historical Jesus. But should new historical situations yield to new interpretations of traditional conclusions? Some may argue that the Magisterium has a history of a relentless rigidity until (and sometimes even after) its positions have been challenged by the hard facts of science. If this is the case with the methods and the doctrinal formulations of the Church, could we expect the CDF to reconsider changes in its theological language, in its understanding of the human situation, and its assertions of the divine-human relationship, if the questions that challenge the tradition are not supported with irrefutable evidence? In these cases, without the “hard facts,” it would seem that the CDF prefers to rely on its own confidence in its history and Tradition and its self-assured truths, even if they are self-contradicting or ambiguous. If this is the case, the Catholic Church will always risk compromising its true mission in favor of clinging to its power, and there is ample evidence of this in history. Lonergan’s method offers an opportunity for those in the work of building doctrines and communicating religious values to avoid this by using the method of science and the insight of self-transcendence and divine communication in the form of love, to shape the doctrines so that they may be

indeed true and authentic. And they are measured by the authenticity of the meaning carried through their communications.

We can explore the direction to which each theology would lead in order to determine which method leads to a more authentic appropriation of Christ's mission. Perhaps one "litmus test" is the intelligibility of the method, its practical implementation, and the progress that would result. Does the method reflect insight or oversight? What is the true intended outcome of each, and does it lead to progress or decline? The implications for Dupuis' theology would not only lead us to consider our understanding of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Church in a way that is more inclusive of all human creation and the collaborative sharing of the work of the kingdom of God, it would certainly ground new relationships beyond dialogue, rooted in doctrine that will lead to a unified theological praxis of building the kingdom of God. The implication for the CDF's theology leaves us where we are, unable or unwilling to explain how Christians can work out the mystery of salvation for non-Christians, leaving unclear the necessity of baptism, or what such a baptism must entail (is a baptism with water necessary, or is baptism by desire sufficient?).

While the world will continue to become more aware of religious meaning and its influence on the good and destruction to which it contributes, truly religious people interested in building world peace will examine the doctrines that lend to exclusivity and division and those which lend to a more unified sharing in belief in the one good, the one truth. Religions that retain their theological rights to truth and glorify their uniqueness and superiority will do little to contribute to a true global community of believers, and

will lose believers who seek to participate in authentic religion. The kingdom of God cannot be compatible with a theology that insists on strict expressions that rely on particular and fixed stances that maintain paradoxical ideas that simply don't make sense and only serve to prevent unity in an age when global unity is an ever increasing priority for world peace.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE IDENTITY AND MISSION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN A MULTI-RELIGIOUS MILLENNIUM: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE DUPUIS CASE

Fifty years after the Council, one would wonder if the current state of the Catholic Church was envisioned by Blessed Pope John XXIII when he sought to throw open the windows of the Catholic Church. The recent celebrations of the half-century since the Council have given us a variety of perspectives on the state of the Church in the world since the Council and the changed landscape of theology since then. Many would argue that the present reality is reflected by the deeply polarized views of the Church and even the Council itself, which have carved sharp divisions among Catholics. While some had imagined that the Church would follow the momentum of the Council, others have bristled at the mention of changes instituted by the Council, perceiving them as threats to the Church's identity. While some have described the Council as a watershed moment in Catholic Church history, others ardently insist that it maintained the continuity of Tradition. Pope Benedict XVI made this explicitly clear in his address to the Curia in 2005, stating that any interpretations that signified discontinuity have misrepresented the true spirit of the Council, that the Council did not intend to compromise with the world, and that it was not, in fact, an "opening up to the world" as many have described.

Some say that the Magisterium under the pontificate of Benedict XVI was on something of a crusade. Many voices in theology have faced pressure to remain silent in light of a series of Vatican censures in recent history; scholars have been silenced, and some religious have faced excommunication and laicization for following their consciences over seemingly unchangeable Church teaching. It is an age where, to the dismay of many Catholic faithful, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issues a statement that names the ordination of women as grave a crime as the sexual abuse of a child by a priest.¹ It is an age where a long-respected champion of human rights, Fr. Roy Bourgeois, was asked to recant his statements that women may share the call to serve in the sacramental priesthood, and was dismissed when he said that he must follow his conscience on the matter. His abrupt excommunication and laicization took him by surprise, mainly because the process seemed to him to involve a clear absence of dialogue and occurred without even his own input or response.² Since the Council, many theologians' writings have come under investigation by the Church authorities; among the more recent are Elizabeth Johnson, Margaret Farley, and Peter Phan.

Catholic teaching has long held that reason and intellect are necessary for the proper understanding of one's faith and moral living. Catholics have rejoiced in the freedom to follow the dictates of conscience, even when it may be contrary to the

¹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Substantive Norms" (July 2010), http://www.vatican.va/resources/resources_norme_en.html (accessed July 23, 2013). It ought to be noted that these two grave crimes are categorically different: the ordination of women is classified in crimes against sacraments, where child sexual abuse is classified as a moral crime.

² Roy Bourgeois, *My Journey from Silence to Solidarity* (May 2012), <http://www.roybourgeoisjourney.org/book/index.html> (accessed July 23, 2013).

teachings of the Magisterium. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states in Part Three, Life in Christ, Section One, Man's Vocation Life in the Spirit, under the heading "The Dignity of the Human Person," that one has the right to make moral decisions according to his or her conscience.³ Other documents, including *Humanae Vitae*⁴ and *Dignitatis Humanae*, state explicitly that one is morally *obligated* to follow the dictates of conscience, insofar as human nature allows for the mediation of the Holy Spirit through one's conscience.

Moreover, as the truth is discovered, it is by a personal assent that men [*sic*] are to adhere to it. On his part, man perceives and acknowledges the imperatives of the divine law through the mediation of conscience. In all his activity a man is bound to follow his conscience in order that he may come to God, the end and purpose of life. It follows that he is not to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his conscience. Nor, on the other hand, is he to be restrained from acting in accordance with his conscience, especially in matters religious. The reason is that the exercise of religion, of its very nature, consists before all else in those internal, voluntary and free acts whereby man sets the course of his life directly toward God. No merely human power can either command or prohibit acts of this kind.⁵

Yet many recent events and statements reflect a different sentiment than this statement.

The words and actions of the recent Church authorities suggest that the individual, and in the case of this study, the theologian, has less freedom to act or conduct research outside of the rigid parameters defined by the Church authorities itself, regardless of the

³ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1782.

⁴ Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* (Encyclical Letter on Human Life), (July 25, 1968), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html (accessed July 23, 2013), 10.

⁵ Paul VI, *Dignitatis Humanae* (On the Right of the Person and of Communities to Social and Civil in Matters Religious), (December 7, 1965), http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html (accessed July 23, 2013), 3.

statements on conscience of these earlier ecclesial documents. There seems to be a wave of caution flowing down to the local churches as well; for example, Deacon William Ditewig was recently uninvited to speak on the diaconate in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia over concern on his research on women deacons in the early Church, even though that was not the content of his presentation.⁶

The late Cardinal Martini, among others, has suggested that it is time for self-reflection, admitting of wrong-doing, and transformation in the Catholic Church. He viewed the Church as being out of date and prioritizing bureaucracy over service. Cardinal Martini courageously and publicly stated that the resistance to reform is rooted in fear.⁷ Abbot Martin Werlin of the Swiss Bishops Conference has also called for dramatic reform in the Church, inviting the leadership to learn from the other churches, and to find the “fire” needed to ignite the spirit within the Church. He said that Pope Benedict XVI was aware of the problems facing the Church but made no changes. He sees the progress of the Church at a crawl, and a lack of cooperation to develop a common vision or plan for Catholics. He says, “Bishops should realize their responsibilities and with the help of theologians, and together with the pope, face changes

⁶ Joshua J. McElwee, “Former bishops’ staffer banned over women deacons,” *National Catholic Reporter Online*, December 6, 2012, <http://ncronline.org/news/theology/former-bishops-staffer-banned-over-women-deacons> (accessed July 23, 2013).

⁷ John Allen, “Translated Final Interview with Martini,” *National Catholic Reporter*, Sep. 4, 2012, <http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/translated-final-interview-martini> (accessed August 4, 2013). This is a translation of the interview given to *Fr. George Sporschill on August 8, 2012. It was first printed in the Corriere della Sera.*

in full faith.”⁸ Like Martini, he calls on the Church to face its fears.

The hierarchy’s fear seems apparent to many people. Dupuis also saw his situation as the result of the Church’s fear of moving into a new era of inter-religious relationships, as though this would threaten Catholic identity. The CDF seems to fear that, as people begin to find solidarity with other religions, religious identity may become more pluralistic in nature. Dupuis would suggest that our Catholic identity and experience is, in fact, reinforced and *deepened* when we participate in the mystery of God along with others who respond to the mystery in their various religious expressions.

The conflicting positions reflect the ongoing difficulty in determining Catholic identity in a multi-religious world. This affects not only theologians, but also missionaries and all the faithful as we recognize the value of other religions but also desire to follow our commitment to evangelization and proclamation. Where earlier theologies had offered solutions to the problem of the salvation of others and the necessity of baptism through ideas such as “anonymous Christianity” and “baptism by desire,” we might wonder if even these concepts would be so well-received if introduced at the end of the twenty-first century amidst the discussion of inclusive pluralism. The objectives of those in missionary work or those who practice Christianity in predominantly non-Christian areas of the world often see the state of the problem and its potential solutions as what may appear by CDF standards to conflict with the objectives of the new evangelization. Peter Phan’s work provides us with several examples of the

⁸ Christa Pongratz-Lippitt, “Swiss abbot makes fiery appeal for church reform,” *National Catholic Reporter*, Dec. 20, 2012, <http://ncronline.org/news/global/swiss-abbot-makes-fiery-appeal-church-reform> (accessed July 23, 2013).

impracticality of the CDF's expectations for global theologies and the ineffectiveness of such views that are closed to the reality of the global Church.⁹ This should come as no surprise in the wake of *Dominus Jesus*, which stated in no uncertain terms the official Catholic position on the treatment of religious pluralism at the dawn of the new millennium.

As was discussed in chapter three, *Dominus Jesus* did little to improve ecumenical or inter-faith dialogue. Though it did not contradict the Vatican II statements that emphasized the goodness and truth present within other religions, it was quick to point out their deficiencies. As some theologians have suggested, *Dominus Jesus* has not succeeded in clarifying the Catholic position on its relationship to other religions, but its inconsistency with conciliar documents and the statements of Pope John Paul II has obscured the matter. Dupuis suggests drastic consequences for the reversal in ecumenical progress:

[C]ompared to the signs of hope which the open and receptive attitude of the Council Vatican II had given us, and which had been confirmed by statements and symbolic gestures of two popes, this document represents a serious step backwards in the ecumenical field as well as that of interreligious dialogue, whether with Jews or Muslims, or with whatever religion of the East. Much good will on all sides will be required to repair the damage.¹⁰

At the very least, some theologians maintain that it halted progress on ecumenical efforts and interfaith dialogue. It also seemed that the CDF disregarded the reaction of our non-

⁹ Phan's work in *Christianity with an Asian Face* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2003), and *Being Religious Interreligiously* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004) focuses on the praxis of inter-religious theology. His book *Being Religious Interreligiously* was also under examination by the CDF.

¹⁰ William Burrows, *Jacques Dupuis Faces the Inquisition: Two Essays by Jacques Dupuis on Dominus Jesus and the Roman Investigation of His Work* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 72. This is from Dupuis' essay, "The Declaration Dominus Iesus and My Perspectives on It."

Christian brothers and sisters upon their reading of it. Francis Clooney offers this response to *Dominus Jesus*:

Centuries of missionary work have not convinced [non-Christians] that their souls are in peril; they are not worried about their lack of union with Rome; they have no reason to revere the document as the work of a flawless magisterium; they will be amused or upset by its characterization of their traditions as gravely deficient; and they will want to know whether there are still good reasons why they should engage in dialogue with Roman Catholics, whatever reasons Catholics themselves might have.¹¹

One wonders what the long-term effects of such a statement may be, not only because of its pejorative remarks about the deficiencies in these other religions, but its influence on the ways Catholics understand God's activity among humankind overall. One may wonder if there was any consideration given to one of the common questions of many of the world's faithful in today's globalized situation: how do we conceive of unity and solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world while our identity is defined by our differences? And one may wonder if any consideration was given to the possibility that the language in the document appears to limit the activity of God, as though the Catholic Church may determine with certainty the manner by which God saves the unbaptized. If the CDF wishes to accuse other traditions of deficiencies, it may consider that the other religions may easily see this method of controlling the belief of its faithful as absurd.

As Dupuis' work demonstrates, the Catholic Church's treatment of this problem has ranged from extreme exclusivism to conditional inclusivism through the course of history. Of interest here is the way the theology of religions is taking shape in this era,

¹¹ Francis X. Clooney, "Dominus Jesus and the New Millennium," *America*, October 28, 2000, <http://americamagazine.org/issue/386/article/dominus-iesus-and-new-millennium> (accessed July 23, 2013).

particularly since Vatican II, and the interpretation of conciliar and post-conciliar statements by theologians and the Magisterium. This branch of theology is but one area in which theologians are facing censure. The CDF's resistance to such theologies has slowed the progress of theology of pluralism at a critical point in history, and at a time when the Church must act upon its commitment to engage the modern world. Some say that we have suffered a backslide in ecumenical efforts. The pope's statements through the first decade of the second millennium have left us wondering if there is any room for a Catholic theology of religions at all. Dupuis' reaction:

Some ability to self-criticize would lead to a different posture, including regret for past mistakes and intransigent attitudes. I believe that an alternative or even better way for discovering and strengthening one's identity would consist in a sincere dialogue with others...The concrete reality of today's religious pluralism is distressingly absent. No effort whatever has been made to meet this reality, to understand it and sympathize with it, as an indispensable first step for an inductive method of theologizing. The result of such ignorance is that the other religious traditions are seriously undervalued.¹²

Pope Benedict XVI's 2012 Christmas address to the Roman Curia, however, presents a much different objective to inter-religious dialogue. While he affirmed the value of dialogue, he stated that dialogue should *not* seek conversion. Instead, dialogue partners should develop respect for each other while maintaining their own religious boundaries. The objective is not to erase the differences between the religions, but come to an understanding of the other while keeping the differences between religions intact. Dialogue seeks understanding and closeness, but no transformation of the dialogue

¹² William Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 71. This is from Dupuis' essay, "The CDF Process and Notification and My Perspectives on Them."

partners' religious identities.¹³ Clearly, his statements contrast with Dupuis' idea of conversion to one another. It is easy to see how this objective of dialogue contrasts with the objective of Dupuis' theology of inclusive pluralism. Dupuis states:

There can be no doubt that the Christian identity must be preserved in its integrity in the process of encountering and entering into dialogue with the other religious traditions. There is no dialogue in a void or in a flux of personal religious persuasions. But the sincere affirmation of the Christian identity need not imply exclusivist statements by which any positive significance in God's eternal design for humankind, assigned to the other traditions by God, is *a priori* denied. Christianity and the Church do not have the monopoly of the truth and of the benefits and means of salvation, even if they have received in Jesus Christ the "fullness" of revelation and from the risen Lord the fullness of the means of salvation. Absolute and exclusive statements about Christ and Christianity, which claim the exclusive possession of God's self-disclosure or of the means of salvation, distort and contradict rather than corroborate or enhance the Christian message and the Christian image. The fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ does not imply the denial of divine revelation elsewhere. Rather, it may be stated that it suggests it.¹⁴

If the statements of the CDF and its treatment of theologians who have attempted to advance the Christian theology of pluralism damaged future ecumenical discourse, inter-religious dialogue, and theologies of pluralism, what might we expect for the future Catholic Church and its relationship with other religions? Does the Vatican consider its more conservative posture towards other religions a necessary step toward clarifying Catholic identity? In contrast to Dupuis' idea of conversion to one another, and the

¹³ Pope Benedict XVI, Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI on the Occasion of Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia, December 21, 2012, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2012/december/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20121221_auguri-curia_en.html (accessed July 20, 2013). See also The Vatican Today, <http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-address-to-the-roman-curia> (accessed July 20, 2013).

¹⁴ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 101. This is from Dupuis' essay, "The CDF Process and Notification and My Perspectives on Them."

deepening of one's own faith through the recognition of the faith of someone in another tradition, Benedict XVI makes two clear points concerning the outcome of dialogue:

1. Dialogue does not aim at conversion, but at understanding. In this respect it differs from evangelization, from mission;
2. Accordingly, both parties to the dialogue remain consciously within their identity, which the dialogue does not place in question either for themselves or for the other.¹⁵

Though Benedict's statements in his address to the Curia in 2012 are gentler than the statements found in *Dominus Jesus*, they are incongruent with the goals of dialogue proposed by Dupuis' book.

A Review of Methods and Theologies of Dupuis, Lonergan, and the CDF

What, then, to make of the pluralism in our world and its impact on the global community? What will clinging to exclusive language do for our social and political relationships, and how will it fulfill our duty as Christians to respond to Christ's commandments? Will we as a Church serve as a better witness to Christ if we proclaim his message without demanding conformity with our doctrines and ways of worship, and welcome others as fellow sojourners toward our common fulfillment? We have seen two main positions on this. The first, that of Dupuis, states that building the Kingdom of God authentically must be more than an act of collaborative humanitarian action, but must be rooted in theology and clear in Christian teaching. The second, that of Benedict XVI, is that we should proclaim the Gospels and respect the different traditions while maintaining our differences and distinct identities, and not conform ourselves to one another.

¹⁵ Pope Benedict XVI, *Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia*.

Dupuis, Lonergan, and the CDF each offers a unique contribution to this problem. We may ask if anything may be gained from each perspective that may give the Catholic Church hope in a future where religious pluralism is less problematic in our language.

While we have explored in depth Dupuis' method for a Christian theology of inclusive pluralism in chapter two, we may summarize the positions of the CDF and of Lonergan to determine whether the possibility exists for the Catholic Church to construct theological language that more specifically construes salvation of non-Christians, without undermining the truth and value, and indeed the presence of God, in the other religions. The rest of this chapter will analyze the conflict and suggest what is needed to move the theology of pluralism forward in the coming years.

Jacques Dupuis

Dupuis' theology of inclusive pluralism does not deviate from the doctrines of the Catholic faith, and may serve as ground for further research which could be incorporated into the official language of the Church. Dupuis, as we have seen, viewed it as imperative to develop a non-exclusive Christian theology in order to further the progress of inter-religious dialogue. Thus, he saw the need for development of Christian doctrines to justify an inclusive position that will replace the traditionally held exclusivist, or, at its best, ambiguous one. His method considers what recent Church documents explicitly affirm about other faiths: the experience of truth and goodness in the religions may offer paths of salvation. As his research has shown, only in relatively recent ages has the official language of the Church reflected genuine acceptance of other religions and found validity in non-Christian responses to God. Dupuis, however, *begins* with the human

experience of God rather than the strict interpretation of revelation by the Catholic Church. Although one may come to understand truth through doctrinal knowledge, knowledge of God is found in the experience of God's love. His method is thus inductive, but not subjective, relativistic, or dismissive of the revelation given through Jesus Christ or the value of the Church. Rather, it considers all of the dimensions of revelation and response in what he calls the hermeneutical triangle, which is the truth revealed through the exchange of text, context, and interpreter. This method is anything but individualized or reductionist, but in fact constitutes what the Catholic tradition has accepted regarding the ways that God is revealed and received. The hermeneutical triangle, the "interaction between text and context, or between memory and culture, takes place in the interpreter, that is, in the local church."¹⁶ Dupuis believes that deductive methods which begin with the assumption of a univocal interpretation of New Testament passages run into problems when reconciling one revealed truth with another, and so we are left with theologies that are at best ambiguous, and sometimes conflicting. Worse, when the Magisterium is fearful of any alternative or a radical change in teaching, even if it would lead toward a more authentic response to the Gospel, the ensuing theologies are dogmatic and rigid. They may eventually become irrelevant because they misappropriate the complete Gospel message in their failure to accommodate the ongoing revelation of God through the Holy Spirit. Dupuis' method takes into account a true experience of revelation of God, of the hearer of the message, and the history of the human experience of God. Theologies that

¹⁶ Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Pluralism* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002), 16.

choose their methods in order to serve the institutions may lead us astray from what Christ truly intended for his followers. They can be idolatrous and unfaithful.

Dupuis emphasizes that the criteria for salvation as revealed by Jesus include one's willingness to act according to the commandment of love, not acceptance of religious doctrines or affiliation with a particular religion. The early Christian response to Christ and God's love, and the commitment to follow Christ in discipleship were simply the responses to the love of God and the call to care for one another. Dupuis remarks on this in response to the CDF.

One of the great absences in the whole document [*Dominus Jesus*] is love, *agape*. Yet, according to Jesus and the New Testament, what matters supremely is to love: "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him" (1 John 4:16). The love of God and the love of others are inseparable: "He who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 John 4:20). And it is on the love that they have shown or not shown to others that people will be judged on the last day (Matt 25:31–46). What matters primarily for salvation, then, is not how close people have come to the fullness of truth, nor whether they have benefited from the means of salvation entrusted by Jesus to the Church, but how much they have loved. Love, as we know, is notoriously present among the poor; and this is one reason why Jesus told the poor: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20). Speaking to his disciples he added: "Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you: it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God" (Matt 19:23–24). Jesus did not say: "How hard it will be for non-Christians to be saved!"¹⁷

For Dupuis (and for Lonergan, as discussed in chapter four), prior to the assent to doctrinal statements is the acceptance of God's love. God's love is universal in the extension of love through Christ and in the immanence of God's love in the Spirit, the

¹⁷ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 67. This is from Dupuis' essay, "The Declaration Dominus Iesus and My Perspectives on It."

witness of love in the world (by both Christians and non-Christians), the response to the transcendence of God, and even in the revelation of God's love in Christ.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

The CDF's approach to religious pluralism, it seems from the Notification and *Dominus Jesus*, appears to protect the status quo. It appears that its aim is to limit the theological grounds for inclusive pluralism and even possibly the direction of missionary activity as well, preferring instead to maintain Catholic identity by adhering to strict boundaries drawn by ecclesial allegiance. Dupuis himself believed that the Notification may have been intended to send a message to the Asian Church, whose pluralistic identity was blurring the boundaries of Catholic belief, at least according to the CDF.¹⁸

From the Notification, we can see that the CDF's stance on pluralism is restricted, at most, to the language of dialogue and good will expressed in Vatican II and in the statements of Pope John Paul II, but is not open to language that in any way appears to rearticulate the teaching on the historical Jesus, the one economy of salvation, and the uniqueness of the Christian Church. Therefore, the CDF would regard a theology of inclusive pluralism to fall outside the limits of Catholic teaching, and makes no room for anything other than the possibility of salvation of the others as a matter of faith in the mystery of the work of God. Where Dupuis sought to explain this more deeply, the CDF seemed to be paralyzed by its own statements.

Lonergan

Like Dupuis, Lonergan leaves room for a Christian theology of pluralism. Though

¹⁸ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 24. This is based on Dupuis' statement to Burrows that he felt he had been used as a "symbol" by the CDF to set "limits" for the Asian theologians.

Lonergan has not developed a theology of religions like Dupuis, it could be argued that Lonergan's cognitional theory and treatment of conversion could feasibly lay the foundation for a theology of pluralism. Lonergan's universal approach to religious conversion diminishes the emphasis on the differences among the religions. With this as the basis for a method of Christian theology, this can also be the basis for a theology of religions, and indeed, take a direction similar to Dupuis' theology. In Lonergan's construction, not only is this possible, but, in fact, religions are already implicitly bound together by religious conversion, moral conversion, and religious values. Their differences largely rest in intellectual conversion, although Lonergan sees this as secondary to the already shared human experience of conversion to God, and also secondary to the true meaning and response to the Gospel message.

Not only does Lonergan leave room for the development of such a theology, he implied that the future of Christianity would necessitate it, as he saw it toward the end of the 1960s. In fact, he opened his essay on Christianity's future with a discussion of the imperative to engage in meaningful dialogue with the world's religions. He did not back down from the uniqueness of the Christian religion or its necessary task in serving God and neighbor, nor did he stray from the centrality of Jesus Christ as the basis for our understanding of the magnitude of God's love, but these were not presented as part of an exclusive religion, but more as a matter of particular identity, historical response, and communal expression. Further, he said that Christian knowledge and active response to the Gospel message gives full expression to the otherwise unthematic character of the response of God's love to the human inquirer. Christianity, through Jesus, gives

Christians explicit knowledge about God's love and the ways in which it is to be practiced in community and solidarity with the human race.¹⁹

Lonergan did not hesitate to be fully inclusive of the "others" based simply on the universal salvific quality of conversion to God. His basis is Christianity's own understanding of the immanence of God in human hearts, to which he draws parallel statements in the sacred writings of Islam and Hinduism. He continues with the universality of God's love as it is expressed equally in the religions, the common value of sacrificial love, and finally the shared value of the love of one another.

Lonergan does not deem non-Christian religions of lesser value to Christianity or in any way deficient, though he does preserve the unique content and value of the revelation of this message in the person of Jesus. He notes that, even in early Christianity, belief and action arose from the response to the message and event of Christ, *not* the acceptance of a particular worldview or set of doctrinal formulations. He and Dupuis seem to share this perspective. Lonergan says, quoting C.F.D. Moule,

At no point within the New Testament is there any evidence that the Christians stood for an original philosophy of life or an original ethic. Their sole function is to bear witness to what they claim as an event-the raising of Jesus from among the dead.²⁰

Most significantly, Lonergan affirms the possibility of salvation through the simple universal experience of conversion to God. He says on more than one occasion, "God

¹⁹ Bernard Lonergan, "The Future of Christianity," *A Second Collection*, ed. William F.J. Ryan, S.J. and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1974), 162.

²⁰ Lonergan, "The Future of Christianity," 156. Lonergan uses the work of C.F.D. Moule, *The Phenomenon of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1967) p 14.

grants all men [*sic*] sufficient grace for their salvation.”²¹ The Spirit works in the hearts of the individual and of the many, who form community. Relying on Saints Paul and Augustine, Lonergan points out that the experience of God is not restricted to the Christian, but “still the experience of resting in God ordinarily needs a religious tradition for it to be encouraged, fostered, interpreted, guided, developed.”²²

The foundations for a Christian theology of pluralism exist through the exchange of religious meaning through shared religious values. In these moments of recognition of what is shared among two people of different faiths, conversion occurs. For Dupuis, this may be considered the conversion to another. Lonergan says it is an exchange of horizons.

Lonergan’s cognitional theory demonstrates that, insofar as the question of God lies within everyone’s horizon, conversion is possible. Religious conversion is the basis of faith, but religious belief is mediated through one’s personal experience, one’s community, and one’s culture. The CDF distinguishes between belief and faith, but Lonergan defines these differently and sees their distinction as an opportunity for shared religious encounter.

By distinguishing faith and belief we have secured a basis both for ecumenical encounter and for an encounter between all religions with a basis in religious experience. For in the measure that experience is genuine, it is orientated to the mystery of love and awe; it has the power of unrestricted love to reveal and uphold all that is truly good; it remains the bond that unites the religious community, that directs their common judgments, that purifies their beliefs.

²¹ Bernard Lonergan, “Theology and Man’s Future,” *A Second Collection*, ed. William F.J. Ryan, S.J. and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1974), 139.

²² Lonergan, “Theology and Man’s Future,” 146.

Beliefs do differ, but behind this difference there is a deeper unity. For beliefs result from judgments of value, and the judgments of value relevant for religious belief come from faith, the eye of religious love, an eye that can discern God's self-disclosures.²³

Lonergan in no way dismisses the centrality of Christian revelation and the necessity of the Church, yet he understands the differences to be a matter of intellectual agreement (though it could be argued that these sorts of differences may not be matters of intellectual conversion but simply the result of inherited cultural differences), and finds the foundation of authentic faith in religious experience, beginning with the experience of God's love, through religious and even moral conversion. Lonergan appreciates the limitations of religions and religious formulations, and finds that what is true about religious meaning is first revealed through the love of God.

But who it is we love, is neither given nor as yet understood. Our capacity for moral self-transcendence has found a fulfillment that brings deep joy and profound peace. Our love reveals to us values we had not appreciated, values of prayer and worship, or repentance and belief. But if we would know what is going on within us, if we would learn to integrate it with the rest of our living, we have to inquire, investigate, seek counsel. So it is that in religious matters love precedes knowledge and, as that love is God's gift, the very beginning of faith is due to God's grace. On this showing, not only is the ancient problem of the salvation of non-Christians greatly reduced, but also the true nature of Christian apologetic is clarified. The apologist's task is neither to produce in others nor to justify for them God's gift of his love. Only God can give that gift, and the gift itself is self-justifying. People in love have not reasoned themselves into being in love. The apologist's task is to aid others in integrating God's gift with the rest of their living.²⁴

²³ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 119.

²⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 122-3.

Religious expression, doctrines, worship, and study constitute different realms of meaning, but they should not conflict with an *a priori* knowledge of truth. What is shared among religious traditions are the religious and moral values, which are already affirmed *de facto*, but division is often rooted in the historical and culturally derived expressions, which sometimes become defined as absolutes, even at the cost of authentic religious love. Thus, Lonergan concludes that what is shared among religions is already established through religious and moral conversion, and division is perpetuated by a lack of intellectual conversion and justified by ideologies. Like Dupuis, Lonergan finds religious absolutes of this sort idolatrous, leading to decline, because they are not based upon an authentic foundation. This is why the first seven functional specialties come together in the eighth, and why the eighth rests upon the first seven.²⁵ This controversy illustrates Lonergan's conclusion: authentic theology yields authentic religious communications which lead to progress, and theology that is unauthentic leads to decline.

Lonergan's approach would not resonate with classicist culture. Classicism, as has been shown in chapter four, sets norms based on a particular cultural worldview, presuming that one perspective applies to all people for all time, leaving no room for any other. Divergent perspectives might be quickly labeled as relativistic by someone who fears that these changes will threaten what is deemed absolute and definitive. Lonergan, by contrast, holds that true knowledge of God more courageously allows for the knowledge that is given through grace, and not dogmatic constructions and mandates.

Methods

²⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 355.

The differences in the theologies of Dupuis and Lonergan, which offer at least an opening for a Christian theology of religions, and that of the CDF, which instead defines the boundaries of religious belief, may be viewed methodologically. While the CDF identifies the inductive method of Dupuis as relativistic, a product of the modernist agenda which centralizes the individual and the intellect, the theologians rather place at their center not the individual and the limits of the human intellect, but the transcendent knowledge of God and the love of God, with a theocentric focus over a Christocentric or ecclesiocentric one.

In *Toward a Christian Theology of Pluralism*, Dupuis described the contrasts between his method and that of the CDF. Dupuis cautioned against an ecclesiocentric approach, for its tendency to equate the Kingdom of God with the Catholic Church and its failure to distinguish the mystery of Christ from the existence of the historical Church, resulting in a very exclusivist position.

In this text, as in the very title of the document, the mystery of Jesus Christ and that of the Church seem regrettably placed on one and the same level of unicity and universality in the mystery of divine salvation, apparently forgetting that the Church is a derived, related mystery, which finds its significance exclusively in the mystery of Jesus Christ. Surely between Jesus Christ and the Church a distance ought to be maintained, lest we multiply absolute claims and affirmations.²⁶

Not only does this lead to methodological difficulties, but it may lead to a dangerous sort of spirituality when the Church is placed on equal level as the person of Jesus Christ, rather than a servant to Christ. Dupuis' method, by contrast, broadens the language of the

²⁶ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 32. This is from Dupuis' essay, "The Declaration Dominus Iesus and My Perspectives on It."

identity and mission of the Church to be the servant of God which has the task of continuing the commission of Christ for all the world until the eschaton. Dupuis' method, therefore, may assign a task that is broader than the limits of the CDF's exclusive language. Dupuis believes that the central task of the Church is to offer conversion to God through the revelation of the historical person of Christ as well as the universal presence of the Word and the activity of the Holy Spirit. Dupuis sharply reminds the CDF of this in his response to *Dominus Iesus*: Jesus himself never imposed ethical or even religious requirements for entrance into the Kingdom, but only required a conversion "of the heart," which entails "an act of faith in the God of life and an act of love."²⁷ And so follows the task of the Church; it must not place itself higher than Jesus himself in history, but must simply carry on the work of announcing the Good News. By contrast, the CDF's statements express a preference for the conversion of "others" to Catholicism, which will only provide the full means to salvation. In the perspectives of both Dupuis and the CDF, the Church is necessary, but in neither case is it absolute or equivalent to the work of the triune God.

The CDF's responses to Dupuis' theology, both in the Notification and *Dominus Iesus*, prove several of Dupuis' points. Dupuis calls for a Christian theology and language that more clearly defines the universality of Christ, the transcendent God, and the work that Christ entrusted to us after his departure from Earth, and the particularity of the historical Jesus and the historical commission of the apostles to make believers of all

²⁷ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 56. This is from Dupuis' essay, "The Declaration Dominus Iesus and My Perspectives on It."

people. Dupuis' point that the traditional language is not being used constructively to further ecclesial and ecumenical efforts is also proved through the CDF documents. Dupuis' experience and his immersion in Indian culture and religion led him to the conviction that revising the Catholic claims that non-Christian religious belief was somehow unequal in value was a necessity for Catholic theology. The CDF also proved that the ecclesiocentric focus of many traditional formulations limits the potential of interfaith encounter.

This study demonstrates how Lonergan's method may serve as a model of an authentic theological method that leads to authentic religious communications. We will compare the methods of the CDF and of Dupuis to determine which ecclesiology lends more to authentic religious communications and progress, as defined by Lonergan.

We have observed some similarities in Lonergan's and Dupuis' methods. First, both begin by considering the myriad revelations of the divine and the experience of conversion to God prior to assent to doctrines. Both theologians agree on the following points, all which conform to the teachings of the Catholic Church:

- that the revelation through Christ is the fullest and most complete way of knowing God categorically that people may know,
- the revelation of Christ calls for historical response to this revelation, that the communal experience of responding to God is necessary,
- the Catholic Church has something definitive and unique to contribute to mediating the revelation of God and to leading humanity to its fulfillment.

While the two theologies do not overlap at every point, it is clear that an inductive approach which begins with a common religious experience may well serve as a theological ground for a theology of inclusive pluralism. In fact, some would say such a method that develops from the event of God as revealed and received, where religious experience begins with conversion and a shared response to God, is a more authentic theology of any religion, and is an obvious starting point for a Christian theology of religions.

The method of the CDF, unlike that of Lonergan or Dupuis, relies upon ecclesial statements, and the centrality of the Church and assent to its authority is prominent. While the Church is built from the universal revelation of Jesus Christ, the CDF's ecclesiocentrism and insistence on doctrinal assent do not forward the progress for meaningful inter-religious dialogue or a theology of religions for our day.

From the CDF's statements, it appears as though the CDF acknowledges the presence of God in other religions, but clearly prioritizes the necessity of the Church in terms that seem very exclusivist, and reverses the progress made as recently as Pope John Paul II's own statements. By Dupuis' analysis,

I regret, on the other hand, that the Declaration also contains halftruths, in the sense that, while one aspect of the truth is one-sidedly stressed, the complementary aspect is often overlooked altogether. The positive statements of Vatican Council II on other religions have practically been pushed to the way-side. I also regret that important statements of the Council receive in the Declaration a restrictive interpretation.²⁸

²⁸ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 71. This is from Dupuis' essay, "The Declaration Dominus Iesus and My Perspectives on It."

Theologians have reacted to *Dominus Jesus* as a giant leap backwards and even an ecumenical embarrassment. To cast non-Christian religions as “gravely deficient” is potentially detrimental to dialogue and it may reverse the great strides made by *Nostra aetate*’s affirmation of all that is true and holy in these religions. These negative sentiments towards the “others” do nothing for interfaith relationships, but damage even the Christian’s own self-understanding. Dupuis would agree.

There is a way of defending the faith that is counterproductive, inasmuch as, instead of making it attractive, it makes it appear restrictive and narrow. I am convinced that a broader approach and a more positive attitude, provided they be theologically well-founded, will strengthen the credibility of the Christian faith and help Christians themselves discover in the Christian message new dimensions and a new depth.²⁹

Yet the CDF may have feared it would lose credibility if it were to reconsider and perhaps even alter its position. Even when it has revised notifications that soften its rebuke, it does not adapt its method to consider the theologian’s defense, nor does it demonstrate sufficient respect for the intellectual authority and integrity of the theological process. The reaction by the theological community to the Dupuis investigation and to the publication of *Dominus Jesus* placed the CDF in a position to demonstrate its authority, so it could not be perceived as backing down or compromising. In the analysis of William Burrows, a close friend and confidant of Dupuis during and after the investigation, “To drop the case against him [Dupuis] in late 2000 and early 2001 would have made it seem CDF was bowing to the widespread protests against

²⁹ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 72-3. This is from Dupuis’ essay, “The Declaration Dominus Iesus and My Perspectives on It.”

Dominus Jesus.” It became evident to those close to the case that the CDF’s activity may have been politically motivated, and less concerned with theological method. If this is true, it has serious implications for Catholic theologians. Worse, there is much at stake for the Catholic faithful when they are supposed to accept statements that are not motivated by theological truth, but by politics and through abuses of power. The CDF is in the position of authority, and so it may use its power to force theologians to comply with its standards and boundaries, regardless of the personal or professional damage it may inflict.³⁰ What does this suggest for the integrity of the field of theology? One may wonder what value is in the contributions of the theologian, or the extent of theology’s influence in the life of the Church. It seems evident that theologians are ready to build upon the direction set forth by Vatican II and the theology of Pope John Paul II on religious pluralism, while the current authority of the Church wishes to carefully monitor the direction of this theology. We may therefore determine that we will either demand reconciliation among theologians and ecclesial authority, or that the current leadership will take the Catholic Church in a direction that ignores the impetus of Vatican II theology and lead the Catholic faithful to a more insular view of God’s plan of salvation.

Theology and Magisterium

If there is such division between theologians and the CDF, what may be the outcome, and is there a possibility for more collaboration among theologians and the

³⁰ This is evident by the depression and illness that struck Dupuis and his removal from his teaching position at the Gregorian. See Burrows’ preface in *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*. Also, Gaillardetz catalogues the numerous theologians who have come under scrutiny and its personal and professional effects on them in his book, *When the Magisterium Intervenes: The Magisterium and Theologians in Today’s Church* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012).

leadership of the Catholic Church? Richard Gaillardetz has taken on this issue after the past decade of harsh action toward theologians by the authorities of the Church.³¹ Pope Paul VI described the actions of the CDF as loving exercises of authority, yet in many cases, the theologian was taken off guard by the lack of dialogue and cooperation offered before his or her work was condemned.³² While this is a topic worth much greater attention, we may discuss what Dupuis' situation, particularly the Lonerganian analysis of it, may offer to this discussion.

In his posthumously published epilogues, Dupuis shared his experience with the CDF and his interpretation of the process. Although the CDF is presented as a loving organization and the investigations presented as a dialogical process occurring in spirit of love and redirection, Dupuis found it to be an unjust process, driven by power, not love. As noted in *Toward a Christian Theology of Pluralism*, he noted that his work was an introduction in an area of theology whose limits were sketched out by doctrines but which needed fresh reflection, which demanded a “qualitative leap” on the part of Catholic leadership and theologians.³³ He noted that further work may expand on his

³¹ A clarification must be made regarding the use of the term “Magisterium”. While the definition of the Magisterium refers to the teaching office of the Church, theologians, including those referenced in this project, occasionally use the term more broadly. Gaillardetz’ book on theologians who have faced investigations and scrutiny often refers to this as the action of the Magisterium, but I will refer to the broader authoritative bodies of the Church use as “authorities” of the Church, and use Magisterium when it is proper to the pope and bishops.

³² Richard Gaillardetz describes the rapid action of the Magisterium toward several theologians in chapter two of *When the Magisterium Intervenes: The Magisterium and Theologians in Today’s Church* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012). Often, the secret investigations began shortly after the publication of the theologian’s work and disciplinary action was, in many cases, unexpected and regarded as hasty on the part of the CDF. A list and description of disciplinary action may be found in pages 12 – 26.

³³ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 100. This is part of Dupuis’ response to the Notification. See also Dupuis, *Toward*, 2-13.

findings, but that theology must offer a more definitive explanation on the manner in which non-Christians are incorporated into the mystery of salvation. It must have been his expectation that his theology would introduce a theology of human religiosity within the parameters of Christian belief.

In his recently published responses to the Notification and *Dominus Jesus*, Dupuis' reflections indicate the seriously strained relationship between the authorities of the Church and theologians. At the time of writing the book, Dupuis believed he was doing a service to the future of the Church. He described how, when he faced the CDF, he was forced to comply with its statements without his input or any conversation about his theology. The CDF's methodology clearly did not measure up to that of Dupuis in terms of research quality and critical, unbiased, and responsible interpretation, but relied on limited sources to prove its own point.

The theological method put to use in *Dominus Jesus* is purely dogmatic and *a priori*. It consists in listing quotations from the New Testament—often taken out of context and thrown in by way of the proof-text method—which are followed by other quotations from documents of the Council and of the recent magisterium.³⁴

Furthermore, it attacked Dupuis with broad generalizations and false accusations, and offered no direct reference to any text of Dupuis to support its critique.³⁵ These actions had serious ramifications for a sincere and faithful theologian's career, and certainly his personal life, his vocation, and his health. The CDF stated that it was not a personal matter, but it took a toll on Dupuis personally. Further, had it been a true theological

³⁴ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 72. This is part of Dupuis' response to the Notification.

³⁵ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 28. This is from Dupuis' essay, "The Declaration Dominus Iesus and My Perspectives on It."

dialogue, Dupuis and his supporters argue, it would have been resolved without the consequences of the investigative process. The investigation seems to the participants on the side of Dupuis to have been more an issue of power than of theology.

The relationship between the theologian and the Magisterium is addressed in ecclesial documents of the late twentieth century, many which have served as a cause of tension, mistrust, and division between Catholic theologians and the Church authorities. One reason for this mistrust stems from witnessing the hope of Vatican II devolve into policing and bureaucracy by the end of the twentieth century. Vatican II gave hope to the theologian even in spite of his or her dissent. With the council came the acceptance of theologians who had been looked at with suspicion. Even as recently as 1950, Pope Pius XII's *Humani generis* reinforced the idea that theological study was to be under the strict supervision of the teaching authority of the Church. Just a decade later, though the authority of the teaching office was reinforced at Vatican II, the relative liberation of theological inquiry and communication marked two noteworthy changes: less emphasis on the Church officials' power than on the authentic communication of divine revelation, and genuine respect for the contributions of theology. This was reflected not only in the words of the documents, but also in the collaboration among Church leaders and theologians in the Council itself, as well as the institution of the International Theological Commission, all signs of hope for the positive relationship and collaborative efforts in communicating the faith by both the bishops and theologians.³⁶ According to Avery Cardinal Dulles, this was a sign that even dissent could be a positive moment of

³⁶ Gaillardetz, *When the Magisterium Intervenes*, xi, xiii.

reflection and adaptation. He says, “By its actual practice of revision, the council implicitly taught the legitimacy and even the value of dissent. In effect the council said that the ordinary magisterium [teaching] of the Roman Pontiff had fallen into error and had unjustly harmed the careers of loyal and able scholars.”³⁷ As Gaillardetz points out, the Council does not treat the relationship between the theologian and the Magisterium in a separate document, but the matter is addressed in several noteworthy statements, giving some measure of authority and autonomy to the theologian. According to statements in *Dei verbum* and *Lumen gentium*, theologians are endowed with the ability and the tasks:³⁸

- to interpret the Scriptures, under the “guidance” of the Magisterium;
- to interpret Church teaching faithfully (though this is also the duty of all the faithful, including the Magisterium);
- to interpret the meanings and symbols of our times in light of God’s word in order to communicate revelation in a more meaningful and effective way;
- to consider theological questions in light of new data presented in different times and different disciplines;
- to find ways to effectively communicate doctrine in our day;
- to explore unresolved doctrinal issues.³⁹

It is also noteworthy that *Dei verbum* encourages access to the Scriptures on the part of the faithful, by virtue of the supernatural instinct of faith and the power of the Holy Spirit, whereby each person is endowed with the ability to recognize the Word of God

³⁷ David Gibson, *The Rule of Benedict: Pope Benedict XVI and His Battle with the Modern World* (San Francisco: Harper, 2006), 188. Also cited in Father Thomas J. Reese, S.J., *Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 251.

³⁸ Gaillardetz, *When the Magisterium Intervenes*, xi, xii.

³⁹ Gaillardetz, *When the Magisterium Intervenes*, xii. Also see Vatican Council II, *Dei Verbum* (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation), 8, 10, 23, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html, and Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), 12, 54, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

and apply it to his or her life. Even so, bishops have the power to guide this interpretation by virtue of their apostolic office and hold the exclusive task of authoritatively interpreting revelation.⁴⁰ What these statements suggest, however, is that exclusive authority is not granted to the bishops to receive and interpret God's revelation, but that indeed all baptized people are capable of receiving it. In several other documents, the freedom of the theologian appears to be implicit through the statements on religious freedom and the authority of conscience.⁴¹

However, as the twenty-first century grew nearer, there was a reaction to the liberal approaches of theologians, the incorporation of culture and context into theologies, and thus a fear of relativism, modernism, and Marxism drifting into theologies. Thus, harsher and more conservative interpretations of the Council were developed, to the extent that some were accused of misinterpreting the Council entirely, and division emerged over whether Vatican II preserved continuity in the Church or inaugurated change. The response of the Vatican was to reestablish its power through stronger centralization, reducing the power of the bishops' synods and conferences, and to tighten oversight of the teachings of theologians.

The hope for the collaborative relationship which had begun to take shape through the inauguration of the International Theological Commission had waned dramatically towards the third millennium as the ITC began to serve less as a collaborative committee

⁴⁰ Vatican Council II, *Dei Verbum*, 10.

⁴¹ Gaillardetz, *When the Magisterium Intervenes*, xii. Also see *Dei Verbum* 8, 10, 23 and *Lumen Gentium* 12, 54.

and more as a function of the Curia. Further, several documents produced under the pontificate of John Paul II, all issued within about a decade of the third millennium clearly intended to limit the role of the theologian: The Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity, The Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian, *Ad Tuendam Fidem*, and *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*.⁴² The timing of these documents closely precedes the onslaught of censures issued in the last decade, including Dupuis'. One particular document elicited a strong response from theologians, *Donum veritatis*, *The Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian*, published by the CDF in 1990.

Donum veritatis: On the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian

This CDF document from 1990 describes the proper relationship between the Magisterium and the theologian, and offers instruction to the theologian, should his or her conscience disagree with a teaching of the Magisterium. It is divided into four topics: the gift of truth, the role of theologians, the mission of the Church's pastors, and the proper relationship between theologians and pastors. The first section establishes the unifying nature of the truth, that God's revelation through Christ unites his chosen people to God and one another through the covenant. It is therefore the duty of those who seek the truth to proclaim it to all, and to continue to contemplate the truth and their faith more deeply.

⁴² Gaillardetz, *When the Magisterium Intervenes*, 8. Also see Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity*, 9, January 9, 1989, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_1998_professio-fidei_en.html; John Paul II, *Ad Tuendam Fidem*, May 18, 1998, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_30061998_ad-tuendam-fidem_en.html; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum veritatis*, May 24, 1990, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19900524_theologian-vocation_en.html; and John Paul II, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, May 22, 1994, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_22051994_ordinatio-sacerdotalis_en.html.

Section two explains that the theologian adds value to this mission by pursuing, through faith and in communion with the Magisterium, a deeper understanding of revelation, the Word found in the Scriptures and handed on by the Tradition of the Church, for the proper communication of the faith. The theologian pursues this science through prayer, faith, and the love of God. When a theologian disagrees with the Magisterium, he or she must discern the origin of his or her critical attitude, and must always be open to the continuous purification by faith. The task of theology is to understand the meaning of revelation using philosophical concepts and reflection on “revealed doctrine.” Theologians must also understand the historical character of revelation, as well as the human sciences, to better understand revealed truth about the human being and human behavior. While the theologian might -- and should -- also consider culture to help understand the aspects of the mysteries of faith, the “ultimate normative principle for such discernment is revealed doctrine which itself must furnish the criteria for the evaluation of these elements and conceptual tools and not *vice versa*.”⁴³ Though the theologian has freedom of inquiry, the proper order of theology must have revelation as its center, which is handed on and interpreted in the Church under the authority of the Magisterium. The document offers what seems to be a warning, stating that, because theologians may contribute to the life of the whole Church, their perspectives may need “corrections and broadening of perspectives,” and therefore they must possess an openness and willingness to modify their own opinions. Thus, it suggests that the primary task of the theologian is to reflect on the interpretation of Revelation by

⁴³ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum veritatis*, 10.

the Magisterium, which, according to this document, Christ himself entrusted with the task of preserving the deposit of faith.⁴⁴

Section three identifies the role of the Church's Magisterium as the "sole authoritative interpreter" of the Word of God.

[T]he People of God enjoys this privilege under the guidance of the Church's living Magisterium, which is the *sole authentic interpreter of the Word of God*, [my italics] written or handed down, by virtue of the authority which it exercises in the name of Christ.

The task of the Magisterium is to "protect God's people from the danger of deviations in confusion, guaranteeing them the objective possibility of professing the authentic faith free from error, at all times and in diverse situations." According to the document, Jesus gave the task of authoritative interpretation of revelation to the Church's pastors, as well as the charism of infallibility in matters of faith and morals and even natural law.⁴⁵

The fourth section begins under the heading of "collaborative relations," and describes the reciprocal relationship between the theologian and the Magisterium; while the Magisterium continues the work of the apostles, it benefits from the work of the theologians. Theologians add "a deeper comprehension, clarification, and application of revealed doctrine...Theology strives to clarify the teaching of Revelation with regard to reason and gives it finally an organic and systematic form."⁴⁶ In other words, the Magisterium has been given authority by Christ to interpret the Word of God, but relies

⁴⁴ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum veritatis*, 10 – 11.

⁴⁵ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum veritatis*, 18.

⁴⁶ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum veritatis*, 21.

on theologians to reflect on it more deeply. The relationship is reciprocal insofar as the Magisterium may communicate the Word of God to the faithful with the clarity offered by the systematic methods of theologians.

Section four begins with discussion about a mutually benefiting relationship; however, it ends by saying that the theologian must assent to the authority of the Magisterium. The theologian is required to conform its ideas to Magisterial pronouncements, whether they are done “in a definitive way” or not, regardless of the theologian’s intellectual findings, reason, or conscience.⁴⁷ Even those doctrines not directly or divinely revealed, but which are “connected with revelation,” must be “firmly accepted and held.” When the Magisterium guards against ideas incompatible with the truths they define, “the response called for is that of the religious submission of will and intellect.”⁴⁸ The document acknowledges that the theologian may recognize that sometimes what may seem true at one point in time may come to light in a different way over time. This is sometimes the case with the development of doctrinal progress.

The theologian knows that some judgments of the Magisterium could be justified at the time in which they were made, because while the pronouncements contained true assertions and others which were not sure, both types were inextricably connected. Only time has permitted discernment and, after deeper study, the attainment of true doctrinal progress.⁴⁹

Yet this is not for the theologian to determine. If the theologian cannot in his or her conscience conform to the ideas of the Magisterium, he or she is still to assent, which

⁴⁷ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum veritatis*, 23-25.

⁴⁸ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum veritatis*, 23.

⁴⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum veritatis*, 24.

brings the document to its conclusion, on the topic of dissent.

The CDF emphasizes that there is no parallel Magisterium.⁵⁰ There is to be only one authority, and while the Magisterium may benefit and even partake in dialogue with theologians, theologians are obligated by faith and love of the Church to obey and believe the teachings of the Magisterium. Though earlier Church documents refer to the authority of one's conscience, this document offers a clarification in the case of the dissenting theologian. Even when one in his or her conscience finds that his or her ideas do not conform to the teachings of the Church, this does not permit the theologian to use the conscience as an excuse for dissent. The document makes clear that in this case, when the theologian has not, through prayer and love of God, discerned that the Magisterium is correct, he or she may not rely on his or her conscience as a legitimate escape from the obligation to assent to the authoritative interpretation of the Church's pastors. Therefore, it points out in explicit terms that the conscience is no parallel Magisterium. Where there is a difference in the findings of the theologian's conscience compared to the teachings of the Magisterium, the theologian is to submit in silence and patience, knowing that the truth come out in time.

⁵⁰ The document offers an argument against theologians who appeal to St. Thomas Aquinas to justify the validity of disputing the authority of the Church on the basis of conscience. The footnote refutes this argument as follows: "The notion of a 'parallel magisterium' of theologians in opposition to and in competition with the magisterium of the Pastors is sometimes supported by reference to some texts in which St. Thomas Aquinas makes a distinction between the '*magisterium cathedrae pastoralis*' and '*magisterium cathedrae magisterialis*' (*Contro impugnantes*, c. 2; *Quodlib. III*, q. 4, a.1 (9); *In IV.Sent.* 19, 2, 2, q.3 sol. 2 ad 4). Actually, these texts do not give any support to this position for St. Thomas was absolutely certain that the right to judge in matters of doctrine was the sole responsibility of the '*officium praelationis*'." *Donum veritatis*, footnote 27.

[S]uch a situation can certainly prove a difficult trial. It can be a call to suffer for the truth, in silence and prayer, but with the certainty, that if the truth really is at stake, it will ultimately prevail.⁵¹

Ultimately, the theologian should preserve the communion with the Magisterium, and when this is not possible, the theologian is to present to the public that he or she is in communion. When there is not the unity of truth between them, the theologian should preserve a unity of charity. The theologian should never diminish in loyal acceptance of the teaching of the Magisterium, by reason of obedience, even when it is difficult.

[T]he theologian will strive then to understand this teaching in its contents, arguments, and purposes. This will mean an intense and patient reflection on his part and a readiness, if need be, to revise his own opinions and examine the objections which his colleagues might offer him.⁵²

The theologian is to discuss any differences through dialogue with the CDF in an evangelical spirit, and never turn to the mass media, for this would not preserve the unity of faith, and may publicly, before the Catholic faithful, undermine the respect for the teaching authority of the Church. If the dialogue does not lead to a change in perspective, the theologian, no matter what his or her conscience indicates, must allow the Magisterium to exercise its authority. Out of fidelity to the faith and love for the Church, the theologian will trust that the truth will prevail over time.

It may not need much elaboration, but clearly the CDF emphasizes different points on the role and vocation of the theologian than Dupuis, Lonergan, or even some of the statements of Vatican II. It is clear that it seeks to clarify the role of one's conscience, at least when it conflicts with approved doctrines.

⁵¹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum veritatis*, 31.

⁵² Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum veritatis*, 29.

The document clearly reverses the credibility given to theologians in the period of the Council and shortly thereafter, by demanding intellectual assent, even when one's conscience suggests otherwise. One may wonder if the CDF does truly value the unique perspectives of theologians, or if it would prefer, in Lonergan's terms, "parrots" who merely repeat magisterial teachings. It would seem from this document that the latter is the case. We shall see how the CDF's ideas of communications and authenticity compare to Lonergan's understandings of the same concepts, and determine which method and standard of religious communications better serves the Christian faithful and all the people of the world.

Donum veritatis embodies a mentality of the CDF that represents the problem of competition between theologians and the Magisterium. If one of the offices of priestly ministry and leadership of the bishops is instructing the Catholic faithful, what is the Magisterium to do when some theologians are at least equally competent in instructing the faithful, or even the bishops themselves? The unfortunate answer for theologians is found in authoritarian measures by the CDF that regulate the teaching and publication power of the theologians. This is troubling for theologians, only a half century following Vatican II. David Gibson, who has studied the authoritarian methods of Pope Benedict XVI writes,

The relationship between theologians and the papacy is worse today than at any time since the Reformation. The number of theologians investigated, silenced, or removed from office is at an all-time high, even exceeding the numbers during the Modernist crisis.⁵³

⁵³ Gibson, *The Rule of Benedict*, 201. See also Thomas Reese, *Inside the Vatican*, 260.

For theologians, these harsh authoritarian measures are an affront to their intelligence and even their faith, as testified by the one hundred sixty-three European theologians in the Cologne Declaration of 1989, which states that the misunderstanding and misuse of the Magisterium represents "a dangerous intrusion into the freedom of research and teaching."⁵⁴ Pope John Paul II, though having attempted to ignore the voices of the protestors by prohibiting coverage of it on Vatican radio or in *L'Osservatore Romano*, finally addressed it, saying, "truth has been specially entrusted to the apostles and their successors," and that there is no room for "open or stealthy forms of a parallel and alternative Magisterium."⁵⁵ Cardinal Ratzinger issued harsh warnings against what he labeled as a "political power ploy," and stated outright that "there is no right of dissent."⁵⁶ In an interview in November 1989, he hinted that theologians' jobs were at stake should they attempt to dissent.⁵⁷ It was in 1990, one year after the Cologne Declaration, that *Donum veritatis* was published, echoing some of these statements by John Paul II and Ratzinger, and making explicit the absolute authority of the Magisterium over the theologian. Some consider this response and the subsequent actions of the CDF

⁵⁴ Cologne Declaration, "Against Incapacitation — for an Open Catholicism," *The Tablet* (243), 4 Feb., 1989, <http://archive.thetablet.co.uk/article/4th-february-1989/28/against-incapacitation-for-an-open-catholicism> (accessed July 20, 2013).

⁵⁵ Alan Riding, "Theologians in Europe Challenge Pope's Conservative Leadership," *The New York Times*, July 14, 1989, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/07/14/world/theologians-in-europe-challenge-pope-s-conservative-leadership.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm> (accessed July 20, 2013).

⁵⁶ John L. Allen, Jr., *Pope Benedict XVI: A Biography of Joseph Ratzinger* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2005), 69. See also, John Paul II *Ad Tuendam Fidem* and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Concluding Formula of the Professio fidei*, June 29, 1998, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_1998_professio-fidei_en.html (accessed July 20, 2013).

⁵⁷ Allen, *Pope Benedict XVI*, 69.

to be an unraveling of the momentum of the Council, while their opponents view this action as a necessary action to rein in the power of the theologians and to control the dangerous tendencies toward theologies that succumb to liberal ideas which incorporate the secular culture into their theologies.

Theology and the Magisterium in Lonergan

In what sense does the Church leadership wish to engage the contemporary world? What do such different theological approaches mean for the future of Christianity? Is the call for reform of the Church bound to lead to schism? Can unity be achieved by exercising power, and if so, ought this to be deemed an ecclesiological accomplishment? What sort of Church is imagined in the twenty-first century if people remain faithful to the Church out of fear and intimidation? Conversely, what vision of the Church is held by an approach that favors more decentralization, with more respect and authority given to the theologian?

Lonergan was writing at a point in time where the Church and the Catholic faithful were adapting to the Post-Vatican II Church, which may have contributed to his optimism, as it was mostly developed in the honeymoon of the Council and the early stages of the International Theological Commission. One may speculate what shape his perspectives would take if he were writing forty years later, in our current context, or what latitude the CDF would be willing to grant him with his thought.

Lonergan addresses at length the state of theology and the relationship between the theologian and the Church hierarchy. Though we can only begin to contrast the

perspective of the CDF in *Donum veritatis* with Lonergan on the relationship between theologians and the Magisterium, a few points are worth highlighting, especially regarding method, the contribution of the theologian, the authority of interpreting revelation, formulation of doctrines, and, especially, communications. Both the CDF and Lonergan believe the task of the theologian is in service to the mission of the Church, so we shall explore how their two approaches to this task bears on the Dupuis controversy, and then illustrate how the Dupuis controversy makes a strong case for the use of Lonergan's transcendental method.

As we have seen in chapter four, Lonergan believes that there are doctrines of the Church and theological doctrines. The CDF in *Donum veritatis* refers to "revealed doctrines." Two questions arise from this: Do the CDF and Lonergan have different ideas about doctrine and authority, and what, if any, is the relationship between the two types of doctrine? Does this suggest that Lonergan views a "parallel Magisterium" as acceptable?

Lonergan distinguishes between Church doctrines and theological doctrines. The first refers to the teachings that concern Christian belief and living, while the latter refers to academic study that answers questions not necessarily addressed by Church doctrines. In response to whether there is an influence on Church doctrine by theology, Lonergan's ideas on this relationship could prove helpful for this situation and the future of theology.

First, Lonergan discusses how the relationship between theologians and Church has changed over the centuries, as have the methods of theology. He notes that theology has contributed a precision and organization to Church doctrines from the Middle Ages

through Vatican II, but the context has changed, and so the methods must adapt. For example, the use of philosophy and reliance on Aristotle for development of theology was a sound practice for scholastic theology, and the scholastic influence on developing ecclesial doctrines was suitable for an entirely different cultural, academic, and ecclesial context than that of our contemporary world and Church. The contemporary period demands the use of different philosophies, as well as dialogue with human and social sciences as tools for theology, and a call for an empirical method over a deductive one.⁵⁸

There are three options for the theological process, the first two of which represent more of a classicist approach. The third, which is necessary for theological and Church progress today, represents that of historical mindedness.

First, prior to the emergence of historically-mindedness, one had the alternatives of anachronism and archaism. The anachronist attributed to scripture and to the Fathers an implicit grasp of what the Scholastics discovered. The archaist, on the other hand, regarded as a corruption any doctrine that was not to be found in the plain meaning either of scripture or of scripture and patristic tradition. Secondly, as historical knowledge increased, various theories of development were worked out and applied with greater or less success. There is, however, a third option: it would contend that there can be many kinds of developments and that, to know them, one has to study and analyze concrete historical processes while, to know their legitimacy, one has to turn to evaluational history and assign them their place in the dialectic of the presence and absence of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion.⁵⁹

The approach for today's theological method clearly must *not* be one that derives all its principles from universally accepted norms of humanity and culture that emerged out of times that did not have the same depth of knowledge about the created world and the

⁵⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 297-8.

⁵⁹ Lonergan, *Method*, 312.

human being. Doctrinal statements ought to incorporate other culturally-relevant information. A chasm may occur when religious communications diverge; when one side considers the data, and the other rejects it as a form of relativism. This is the difference between contemporary theology that is shaped empirically, which brings the data of the human context into conversation with the universal revelation and call of Christ (such as what is found in Dupuis' hermeneutical triangle), and the dogmatic theology which finds an inductive method as relativistic and dangerous.

This brings us back to the question of the difference in doctrines, the authority of doctrines, the objective of the doctrines, and ultimately to the critical topic of religious communication. There has been a reciprocal influence between theological processes and Church doctrine since the earliest Councils and doctrinal formulations. From the rise of scholastic theology to Vatican II, Lonergan says there was more interplay between theology and Church doctrine. Again, we see how much context contributes to this relationship.

The theological context derived from the Greek councils expanded in the medieval schools to envisage the whole of scripture and tradition. It was not only ongoing, collaborative, and methodical but also dialectical. It was a context that embraced mutually opposed schools of thought, that came to distinguish between opposition in theological doctrine and opposition in church doctrine, that agreed to differ on the former and declined to differ on the latter. Finally, interacting contexts are represented by the context of theological doctrines and the context of church doctrines from the medieval period up to Vatican II. The theologians were under the influence of the church doctrines on which they reflected. Inversely, without the theologians, the church doctrines would not have had their post-systematic precision, conciseness, and organization.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 314.

It seems that this relationship should not be defined by authority, but should be a truly reciprocal relationship between theologians and Church authorities. As Lonergan discussed, there was a period when this relationship was better clarified and mutually beneficial. Then why must there now exist such a tension between them that would warrant such harsh reminders of the authority of the Magisterium and warnings about parallel Magisteria, not to mention the historically high number of investigations in the past decade? Is the culture of theology changing, or are Church authorities overexerting their power?

In his essay “The Future of Christianity,” Lonergan describes the shift of theology from the classicist culture, that which “conceived itself not empirically but normatively, not as one culture among many, but as the only culture which any right-minded and cultivated person would name culture,” to the modern culture “which conceives of itself empirically and concretely.” This essay was published in 1969, but Lonergan’s prediction about the reactionary actions of the classicist culture is proving true, for, as he says, “classicist culture made no provision for the possibility of its own demise.”⁶¹ The reactions of the CDF reflect classicist thinking.

This brings us to the importance of Lonergan’s ideas on authenticity and communications, which are critical to the conclusion of this study. As Lonergan says, authentic communications lead to progress, to the conversion of society, rather than to its decline. In the Dupuis case, it seems that both sides think the other needs revision. It is clear from Dupuis’ responses that he sought to clarify his theological ambiguities for the

⁶¹ Lonergan, “The Future of Christianity,” 160.

CDF and hoped for more common ground established through honest dialogue, with the expectation that his thorough theological study would assure the CDF that his work was in conformity with the teachings of the Church. In this case, however, the CDF clearly abided by its statements in *Donum veritatis* that, whatever the outcome of a disagreement, the theologian must accept the authority of the CDF. Obviously, the CDF's claims of dialogue and loving correction of the theologian in this case seem to be nothing more than words to indicate the appearance of a just process. What can be the benefit of such a process for the Church if it desires, as it says, authentic communication of the Christian message?

In *Donum veritatis*, the CDF often uses the word “authentic,” as does Lonergan. Do the two really mean the same, and what is the outcome of such authenticity for each? For Lonergan, authenticity yields a method that produces a fearless construction of doctrines which yield religious communication that transforms societies in service to the commandments of Jesus Christ. It means respecting the authority of revelation, while adapting theology to the context which it serves.

It is not made explicit in the CDF's documents what, exactly, the definition of authentic is, though its original Latin version more aptly implies authority. In either case, the use of the word in *Donum veritatis* seems to correspond with the sincere transmission of the faith and communication to the faithful, with the primary objective of leading all to salvation; for those outside the Christian Church, it means evangelization that brings them into communion with the Catholic Church, which is the surest path to salvation. “Authenticity” also seems to correspond to the purest preservation of the Scriptures and

the faith as has been handed down through the Tradition of the Church. It follows that what is preserved is linked to magisterial authority, insofar as it alone (according to the documents) has the divinely instituted power to interpret revelation.

While Lonergan would not dispute the indispensable value of preserving and disseminating the truth revealed by Christ and the fullness of this revelation being transmitted through the Tradition of the Church, the method endorsed and the ideology that underlies it are precisely illustrative of classicist mentality.

For Lonergan, authenticity is born from a method that is decisively historically-minded. From this we may conclude that, by Lonergan's standards, Dupuis offered a more authentic theological method than the CDF. This does not diminish the value or the necessity of the CDF's work in preserving the faith, but it does point to the CDF's fear of allowing for alternative expressions of Christian doctrines when they derive from a method that is empirical and not dogmatic. The CDF emphasizes its authority for the proper communications of the faith. Lonergan classifies this approach as unauthentic, dogmatic, and classicist. The CDF classifies as relativistic the empirical approach that is informed by modern philosophy, human sciences, and the experience of God, and the conclusions of such approaches as dangerous. It appears that while both the CDF and Lonergan speak of authenticity, they both desire truth but realize it in opposite manners. But as Lonergan says, when the method is responsible, it is also effective, and this makes police work superfluous.⁶²

⁶² Lonergan, *Method*, 332.

And yet there has been so much policing of theologians in the past decade. We may assume that the desire of both the CDF and the theologians under its scrutiny, particularly of Dupuis, is shared: to provide a deeper understanding of revealed truth for a more richly understood Christianity that will not only help Christians to more fully experience their faith, but establish solidarity among all God's people. Lonergan would acknowledge the sincerity of the intention, but the authenticity of communication, and indeed the message and manner of it, do not represent a converted position on the part of the CDF. For Lonergan, Communications is the fruit of the transcendental method, and it is the effective communication of religious meaning that shapes the world and provides the field for the Christian message to flourish. Communications is, among other things, the meeting of Christian theology with Christian life, and so what is given to be lived must come from the ideas brought forth first from the experience of God flooding the heart of the theologian with love. The communications rendered from authentic and converted theology invite the recipient into a life of service to God and of humankind; the Church, its hierarchy and its ministry, serves as an *instrument* to this goal.

The Value of Lonergan's Transcendental Method for a Theology of Religious

Pluralism and the Catholic Church in the Present Age

For Lonergan, theological method is not only constitutive to all theology, but is a matter of faith. And this is why Lonergan's transcendental method is of such value for this age, for this disagreement, for this question about doctrinal authority, and for this situation of religious pluralism in this historical and ecclesial context. All of these have come into this discussion: pluralism, the role of the theologian, the authority of the

Church. It would be simple to look at this issue and try to resolve it as though it were a simple matter of right and wrong.

But this is not the correct approach to solving this issue, for it creates more division than unity, and fails to provide a sense of direction for the Catholic Church. If Church doctrines are to inform the lives of Christians, and theological doctrines are to lend precision and organization to Church doctrines, then the two must find some unity for the sake of fulfilling the task of the Church. The two must converge at some point for the benefit of the communication of the authentic Christian message, and must be communicated so that Christ's message is understood in every particular time and context, and in a manner that does not alienate its hearers.

The transcendental method offers more than a solution as described above. It is not merely methodical, but is transcendental, because at its heart is conversion. One may compare the methods of Dupuis and the CDF and acknowledge legitimate theological approaches in both. What Lonergan's method contributes is a hermeneutic of conversion, a view of authenticity that will help discern the path for this theology of pluralism. Religion faces no fears when it is authentic because its message or doctrines are developed from a converted foundation. The result is communication of the Christian message that is received and transformative for individuals, communities, societies, and cultures. Method that derives from the experience of the theologian falling in love with God, of God's love flooding the theologian's heart, and a vertical shift in horizon leads to a fearless formulation of God's truths. Let us examine the two approaches of the CDF and Dupuis in Lonergan's terms. How does each measure up to the criteria of Lonergan's

transcendental method, and what may this tell us about the appropriate direction to take on his issue as we move more deeply into a globalized context?

A Perspective of the Dispute through Lonergan's Method

There is little doubt what the CDF's objectives were in producing both *Dominus Jesus* and the Notification. According to Lonergan's understanding of method, had the CDF been authentic and presented an unbiased theology, it would have begun with an evaluation of the history and interpretations, proper Scriptural exegesis, and an unbiased analysis of Dupuis' work. It would itself follow its own guideline for the theological method as a scientific process rooted in prayer and faithfulness. By Lonergan's standard, it would proceed with a differentiated consciousness, ready to encounter other perspectives, ready to move forward into a development of doctrines that reflect the love of God, combined with an evaluation of the data infused with religious value. The result would be communication that reflects its careful deliberations, its value judgments, its foundations, and its consciousness which speaks to what humankind already knows to be true, for it answers the question of every inquiring human heart which searches for meaning.

But instead, the CDF in its Notification to Dupuis and in *Dominus Jesus* asserted its power by enforcing theological boundaries and doctrinal limitations, and demanded adherence to parameters rather than venture an encounter of horizons. It identified itself by default with possession of the fullest truth, the authority of divine communication. While we have acknowledged the value and necessity of such an organization and the duty to preserve the integrity of Christian communications, we have also recognized the

dangers of extreme power. From its statements, the CDF does not appear to conceive of the need for its own conversion but instead demands the assent of the theologian (though its concern for the conversion of the theologian is not as apparent).

Dupuis has pointed out the deficiencies and ambiguities in the CDF's own methods, noting its lack of responsible exegesis, its "proof-text" method in both its use of Scripture and ecclesial documents, and its broad criticisms of his work without any direct textual references. So not only were the methods of the CDF contrary to even its own purported standards of reciprocity according to *Donum veritatis*, but its manner of engaging in theological dialogue was equally deficient. By Lonergan's standards, it certainly fell short of measuring up to the theological method that yields authentic religious communications. Dupuis would agree. He says in his response to *Dominus Jesus*, "The CDF has allowed itself in this document to be carried away by fear, which is a bad adviser, and, paradoxically, can even hide a lack of faith."⁶³ The CDF seemed to rely less on sound theological reasoning to assert its positions against Dupuis, but rather on its authority.

Dupuis, by contrast, begins his theological task after decades of devotion to Christ, fidelity to the Catholic faith, and a life filled with shared religious value in communion with others in the Catholic faith and many outside of it, particularly during his residence in India. His theology began from years of data, history, exegesis, and a deep immersion in a community that responded to God in a way much different than his own Catholic community, but in no way deficient. He embarked upon his theology of

⁶³ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 72. This is from Dupuis' essay, "The Declaration Dominus Iesus and My Perspectives on It."

inclusive pluralism following his own conversion and shift in horizon. His intention may seem quite similar, actually, to that of the CDF, in that it too sought to clarify and communicate more deeply the revelation of Christ as presented in the Scripture and preserved in the Catholic Tradition. This is, in fact, how Dupuis described the motivation and method at the outset of his project, with the humble preface that his work was but one step towards a fuller elaboration of a Christian theology of inclusive pluralism. Dupuis' method is a model for the authenticity of Lonergan's transcendental method.

Communications and the Dupuis Controversy

For Lonergan, the fruit of the theological method is Communications. As I emphasized in chapter four, this eighth functional specialty brings theological language into the world of everyday expression, and, if theology is authentic, it will give rise to conversion and progress in society.

Lonergan claims that Christianity is no longer a religion that understands itself merely by reflection on its own exclusive absolutes.⁶⁴ Christianity, Lonergan says, will better retain its identity when it knows itself in relationship with other faiths. When it retains its unique identity but simultaneously destroys its barriers of exclusion and superiority, only then will it be an authentic follower of the universal savior.

Religious communication in this day, then, must shed the habits of classicism and adapt to modern culture. This is not to say that Catholic identity should be relinquished in favor of the answers offered by modern philosophies and the social and natural sciences. But it means that we must understand the Gospel mission in the same sense as was done

⁶⁴ Lonergan, "The Future of Christianity," 158.

in its earliest practices, where it encountered people in terms of their own cultures and meanings, while communicating within that framework the value of the revealed Christian message.

Just as theology has to enter into the context of modern philosophy and science, so religion has to retain its identity yet penetrate into the cultures of mankind [*sic*], into the manifold fabric of everyday meaning and feeling that directs and propels the lives of men. It has to know the uses of symbol and story, the resources of the arts and of literature, the potentialities of the old and the new media of communication, the various motivations on which in any given area it can rely, the themes that in a given culture and class provide a carrying wave for the message.⁶⁵

Religious communication must ultimately transmit the message that human beings may participate in God's revelation in human history, and in community. Theological communications must be empirical and anthropological to carry the meaning for people in a way that may truly transform their lives, and this can only happen when there is a relationship between the revealed message and the context of human living (as we find in Dupuis' "hermeneutical triangle"). Communications must show that religious value is the fulfillment to existential questions, and which thematizes them meaningfully and authentically. It should make one from a being to a being-in-love, where the value is the fulfillment of "man's [*sic*] being...the source of great peace, the peace that the world cannot give."⁶⁶

Because the experience of God is universal, the communication of religion must be an open invitation to the consciousness of self as a self-transcendent being. It must

⁶⁵ Lonergan, "Theology and Man's Future," 141.

⁶⁶ Lonergan, "Theology and Man's Future," 145.

invite all to authenticity before demanding acceptance of doctrines. Communications must invite people first to the love of God, not conformity with doctrines.

What must be sought in Communications is a deeper identification of one's own Christian belief, while leading to deeper communion with non-Christian brothers and sisters. If the Catholic Church is to herald the Good News, it must itself be committed to the truth to which it is inviting people; the truth is not a source of division but most certainly a source of unity. Only with an invitation to the good news of God's love will adherence to doctrines have meaning at all.

Communications is the result of a method that gives the answer for which each person hopes, the possibility of authenticity and true happiness. Assent to Church teachings prior to a conversion to God may reflect a failure of the Church to communicate Christ's call. The task of discipleship will not be fulfilled when the Church is the center and object of service; only when there is a genuine understanding of the call to build the kingdom of God will Christian discipleship be authentic. Religious communications serves God first and recognizes the mere but necessary instrumentality of the Christian Church.

Conclusion

Lonergan shows us that religious communication must be in meaningful correspondence with cultural meaning. The CDF seems to resist this idea, however, as it appears to have great concern about the relativistic tendencies of modernism and its influence on theologians. There is a clear reaction evinced in the CDF documents that counters relativistic ideas with a deep-seated dogmatism, which reiterates classical

formulations without considering the other possible solutions. The bias of this method, or even a bias of theologians towards falling victim to the lure of modernism or relativistic theologies, demonstrates the value of Lonergan's method. Only methods that seek the truth out of conversion will have no fear of finding the truth and communicating it in ways that are relevant to cultures, even in their diversity. The task of religion, and the aim of Lonergan's theological method and its praxis found in the eighth specialization, is to communicate the universality of the Christian message, of Christ as fulfillment of every variety of the human search, so that all may be transformed as individuals, as communities, as societies, and as cultures that move ever towards progress, recognizing what is authentic, and passing this to their descendants. In Lonerganian terms it is a process of self-transcendence that finds its answer in the falling in love with God, for individuals and for the community born out of faith in revelation...but is not limited only to a single expression or interpretation of God's presence.

In the time since the Notification and Dupuis' death, the official language of the Church has not reflected significant changes to its theological approach to religious pluralism. In fact, further censures indicate that the CDF is not yet willing to adapt to a language of inclusive pluralism. Theologians have not yet given up on this, of course, and many theologians have risen to the defense of Dupuis and have taken up his task to construct a Christian theology of inclusive pluralism. To be sure, Dupuis' efforts were not in vain, and his good will was anything but unnoticed or unappreciated. His work laid the groundwork he had hoped. And, as he proved, there is ample potential in the Church's own teachings for transforming the theology of pluralism, for taking dialogue and

proclamation to a deeper theological level, and indeed for transforming the work of the Catholic Church. But it is important to remember that there is much to do in this area, for the official language of the Church remains ambiguous, leaving the explanation of salvation of the unbaptized to the realm of mystery, even though the doctrines are supportive of a theology of pluralism, and the area is ripe for theological and doctrinal development. In spite of the Church's strides, for example, in the acceptance of language on "anonymous Christianity" and "baptism by desire," the CDF is reluctant to accept a more elaborate theology that explains the salvation of the unbaptized. Although it has, according to its own documents and those of Vatican II, entrusted the theologians to more deeply interpret the doctrines and to better explore those teachings which need elucidation for their communication to the faithful, it has rejected the attempts of theologians who have undertaken the tasks of religious pluralism. Dupuis states quite directly that the lack of explanation does no service to theology or to the faithful. He says,

Dominus Jesus 21 is satisfied to repeat the admission of ignorance professed by the Council Vatican II: this happens "in ways known to God" (AG 7; cf. GS 22). Theologians are "encouraged" to seek to understand the question more fully, since their work "is certainly useful for understanding better God's salvific plan and the ways in which it is accomplished." No mention is being made of any successful attempt at a theological explanation.⁶⁷

According to the CDF's directives on the task of the theologian, Dupuis met all of the criteria in his job as a theologian trying to develop and elucidate an ambiguous area of

⁶⁷ Burrows, *Dupuis Faces the Inquisition*, 62.

doctrine, by addressing a question relevant for today's situation, remaining within the boundaries of the doctrines of the Church, and by attending to Catholic Tradition.

The objective of the study was to illustrate the relevance of Lonergan's method for the contemporary challenge of religious pluralism. Lonergan's method has shown us a few key considerations for fulfilling the tasks of the theologian and the tasks of the Christian church as a whole. First, we see the progressive effects which have come from a horizon shaped out of love of God and fearless encounter with other horizons. Second, we have shown how authenticity shapes not only the outcome of a theology, but authentic and effective religious communications that elicit conversion of individuals and societies. Third, we have seen the effect of bias in the theological method, and how it may indeed lead to decline. Fourth, we have demonstrated the correspondence between Lonergan's ideas of sin, alienation, and ideology with unauthenticity, bias, and decline. Finally, we have shown that Lonergan's estimations about the future of theology and the need to transition out of a classicist mindset to historical consciousness are coming true and are evident in this controversy.

While the CDF has the responsibility to defend the faith and ensure that the Catholic faithful are not misled by theologians, it may want to collaborate with theologians in the field to be sure that the role of Christ is not reduced when communicating the theology of religious pluralism, in this case, and in many others. The authority of the Magisterium need not be abolished or the perception of a parallel magisterium be established. Gaillardetz' book offers a good amount of analysis regarding the proper roles of the Magisterium and the theologian, and offers theological

justification for a system that better delineates the proper contributions of each. It explores the limits of the authority of the theologian in terms of the charisms and the responsibilities of all Christians, and identifies the limits of the authority of even the Magisterium in its prophetic *munus*. Cardinal Donald Wuerl, in response to the recent controversy over Elizabeth Johnson's *Quest for the Living God*, discusses the communion between the theologian and Magisterium as both attempt to fulfill their obligations to communicate the faith:

The legitimate academic freedom of Catholic theologians...may seem to conflict with the pastoral freedom, in fact, the pastoral obligation of the bishop to protect the authenticity of the faith and the spiritual good of the faithful. Nevertheless, when good will is present on both sides, when both are committed to the truth revealed in Jesus Christ, their relationship can be one of profound communion as together they seek to explore new implications of the deposit of faith.⁶⁸

It would seem that something more than “good will” is needed here, however, or that “good will” needs to be more carefully defined, for it is unlikely that any faithful Catholic who is in a position of teaching authority either as theologian or as a pastor, would communicate the faith out of ill will. One great benefit of Lonergan's method is that it offers a systematic attempt to reduce the bias in theological method so that a theological method of “good will” is less subjective. Lonergan's method for theology is grounded upon conversion and therefore reduces the potential for finger-pointing and disputes such as this, but instead leads to cumulative and progressive results.

Conversion of both theologians and pastors is needed for any theology, and must be the basis for a reform of the relationship between the teachers of the faith. There is no

⁶⁸ Cardinal Donald Wuerl, “Bishops as Teachers: A Resource for Bishops,” April 18, 2011, <http://old.usccb.org/doctrine/BISHOPS-AS-TEACHERS-%20CARDINAL-WUERL-4-18-11.pdf> (accessed July 20, 2013). Also see Gaillardetz, *When the Magisterium Intervenes*, 206.

parallel magisterium, but different roles. This is all the more reason for even the pastors to exercise theology that meets Lonergan's objective of reducing bias and achieving authenticity. If theologians continue to diverge from the teaching authority of the Church, but their theology is converted and authentic, and is historically-minded, relevant, and meaningful, then the authorities *will* have something to fear. It may fear that its exercise of power and demand for assent are not authentic executions of its task.

The brilliance and beauty of Lonergan's method is that, because it rests on conversion, it offers theology which begins with a courageous acceptance of truth without demanding assent. And the method provides for the theologian a perspective that does not need to grasp religion as an exclusive ideology, for our religious expressions *are* our identity as people of God and the shared truth among people of different faiths brings the unity that only love can give. The method in theology allows for the proper balance of living religiously and thus responding in an authentically religious way with all others who do the same, and therefore makes true disciples out of us.

I concluded in chapter four that from this controversy we can conclude that, according to Lonergan's method, the CDF is in need of an intellectual conversion. There is a good chance, based on the documents examined here within, that the CDF would argue that it is instead Dupuis (or any number of others that have undergone censure or other consequences) who needs conversion, though by all appearances, it would equate conversion here as assent to its authority. This is quite contrary to Lonergan's idea of conversion.

To be fair, however, we must recall that all theologians are in need of ever deeper conversion. To take an entirely unbiased approach even to this study is not an easy task. The main point of this study is not to point fingers or to cast aspersions, but to show the relevance of Lonergan's method and its implications for the state of the Catholic Church today around the theological and ecclesiological problem of religious pluralism.

The deeper issue that underlies the issue of pluralism has unfolded through this study, which is the seriously damaged and potentially divisive relationship between the authorities of the Church and the theologian. This is a critical period, and further alienation of the Catholic faithful does not seem to be the ideal outcome, and most definitely not the vision of Vatican II. It is clear that over the half-century since the Council, different interpretations of the event and its statements have led to divergent ecclesiologies, multiple theological interpretations, and critical implications for the pastoral work of the Church and the lives of the faithful. The identity of the Church must come to be defined in a way that is meaningful, and the fruits of the Council must be made clear for the pastoral work of the Church and the identities and beliefs of practicing (and "fallen away") Catholics. We must understand the ecclesial vision of the Council and develop a theology of charism and authority of the teachers of the Church now. If the CDF exercises its authority and leadership toward actualizing its vision, it will determine the future of the Church. The intention and spirit of Vatican II must be preserved and lead to a true and lasting reform of the Church, where it is evident that the Church *is* in the World and how it is *still* the light of nations. The Church must continue to show the

world how it is meaningful to the lives of the people and the sign and instrument of God's presence among us, and how it is this through the service of God's call.

This is a critical point in history for the Catholic Church to build solidarity among its own faithful, not to mention with those of other faiths. Record numbers of people, especially younger generations, are becoming part of a group labeled "the nones" because they affiliate with no religion at all. Young Catholics have an unclear understanding of their own religious identity and the significance of their religion among the others. What must this suggest to religious leaders? Can we sit back and blame secularization, modernism, and the sciences for the failure of religion to mediate a truth that is more powerful and still, at its core, offers the answer to even the yearnings of the "nones"? This is *precisely* the situation that Lonergan addressed and it speaks to the urgent need for authenticity in Church authorities, and it points exactly to Lonergan's predictions of progress and decline. It proves his ideas from the 1960s about the critical need to move to a historically-minded world view and the need for religious communication to come from a foundation that is formed from God's love, God's wisdom, and an encounter with other horizons.

What will the world be, what will Christianity and Catholicism be without this, *especially* in an age of religious pluralism? And thus is the purpose of this study. What is the direction of the Catholic Church in this age of pluralism? We may project that, if the trend continues, Catholics will come to question the authenticity of the Church, will find its communications to lack meaning or to fail to connect to them as spiritual beings who yearn for a way to express their deepest searches for meaning. If the Catholic Church

fails to communicate its message of truth, hope, and love, only then might it find pluralism to be a “challenge” because people will find meaning somewhere. The Christian faith is historically tied to the event that revealed God fully and connects humanity with God eternally, and so it must communicate this to its followers. If people do not understand this message, it is the responsibility of the theologians as teachers and disciples, *and of the Magisterium*, to make this message clear and meaningful. This is why Lonergan’s method ought to be given serious consideration by all who communicate the Christian faith, especially with those who claim authority to interpret God’s word for us.

Religious pluralism need not be seen as a threat or a rival, especially at this point in history. From our historical vantage point, not only socially and politically, but also theologically, we must admit to having learned from our past mistakes, to realize the cost of perpetuating deep disagreements. We as a Church must start shaping our future around the reality of the world as it is now and as it is becoming, with ever closer global relationships. We must start shaping our religious communications around the human experience as it is now and as the human community becomes ever closer.

In this day, people are not isolated from one another. They are not isolated from the errors of the Catholic Church or its leaders. The fidelity Christians have toward the Church results from their faith in God, but they see the flawed humanity reflected in the Church’s institution. Putting false boundaries around people to restrict their participation in what is true and holy in other religions will not keep the flock in, nor will it create growth or nourish life within it.

Lonergan's method proves that this limitation of the Christian message is unnecessary. Theologians have found a way to work in both the eternal truth of God's love within the Christ-event and still include those of other faiths into this paradigm. While the language of these theologies may be imperfect, we must acknowledge this about any theology. There are mysteries we cannot grasp and truths we cannot articulate. But God's love is knowable and revealed. Who we are is revealed to us through Christ, and our mission has been made clear.

We as a Catholic Church will be doing the world a disservice by withholding forward progress of building theological relationships among world religions, at a time when we are so easily capable of destroying each other. Now more than ever, religions must find a way to prioritize peace and love, the truth that unites us all. Christianity has no excuse to turn from this responsibility. This is constitutive of Christian identity. It is the task of theologians. It is the responsibility of the leadership of the Catholic Church. This is imperative for building our future and moving forward as followers of Christ, as Christians, and as brothers and sisters in the universal Christ, united by one Word and truth and by our loving and saving creator, God.

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VITA

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While at Loyola, Stapleton served as the President of the Loyola University Chicago Department of Theology Graduate Student Caucus, and assisted with the organization of several colloquia. She served as the co-chair of the Women in Theology study group and participated in a research group in the intersection of religion and science. She has participated in a collaborative research project on feminist theology. Her coursework led her to the work of Bernard Lonergan, which served as a foundation for much of her research. Other research interests include ecclesiology, religious pluralism, contextual theologies, liberation theology, and sacramental theology.

While pursuing her PhD, Stapleton served as the Director of Operations for the National Organization for the Ongoing Formation of Roman Catholic Clergy as well as the Assistant Academic Dean at St. Joseph College Seminary. She has also taught theology courses at St. Joseph College Seminary, Loyola University, and Lewis University.

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